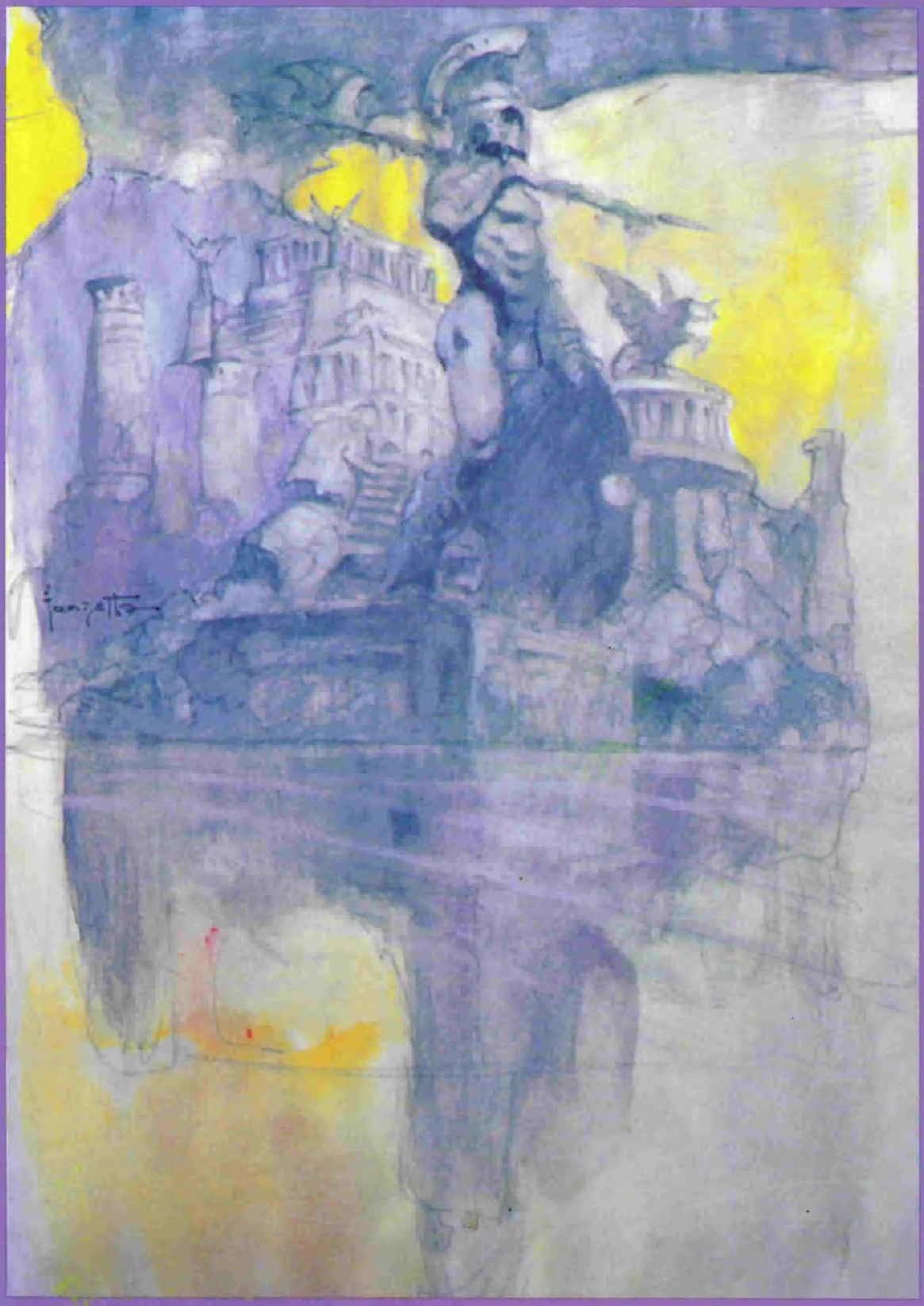
QUA BROT



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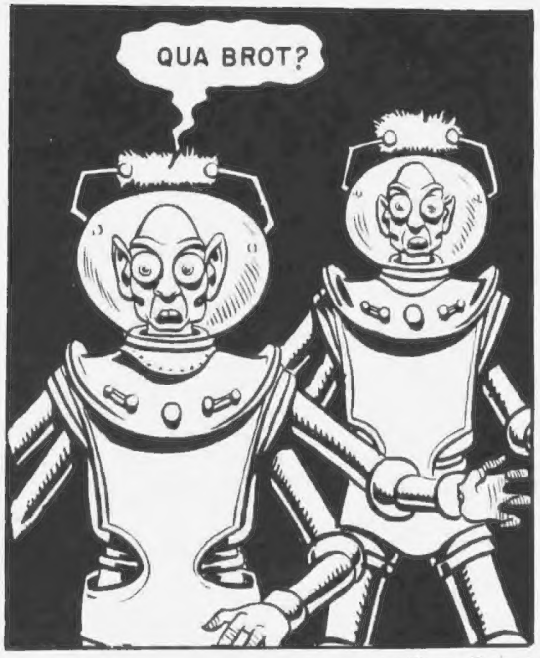

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QUA BROT #1

This issue dedicated in memory of George Snowden whose generous help was a major force behind this fanzine.

Publisher/Editor Kyle Hailey

Associate Editor Bhob Stewart

Special thanks to:
Chris Rock/Russ Cochran
Ellie Frazetta/Frank Frazetta
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Table of Contents

Repaying the Debt by Kim Thompson	3
Gaines Interview	4
The Forbidden Fruit by Don Edwards	9
The Last Ingels Folio by Roger Hill	11
Orlando Odyssey by Greim and Cosgrove	15
Roy Krenkel by Bhob Stewart	19
Ray Bradbury & EC by George Snowden	27
Jerry De Fuccio	33
Wood Galaxy Folio	39
Basically Basil by Dick Voll	44
Panels in My Life by George Snowden	47
Frazetta & Krenkel Index by B. Brenner	52
Frazetta Portfolio	55

Inside covers Wood; p64 Williamson/Frazetta

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Well here it is -- the result of four years of work believe it or not. I think the only way one can really appreciate the amount of time putting out a fanzine consumes is to try it themselves. I certainly have a helluva lot more admiration now for all the people who put out fanzines in their spare time than I had four years ago. Anyway as far as issue number two goes, it depends upon the response to this issue and the amount of help I can get for the next issue. As you can see quite a few people helped out on this issue. If you are interested in helping out on the next issue or have rare material that could be used in the next issue please write to:

Kyle Hailey
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Even if you are not interested in contributing it would be very helpful if you could send a sase (the more copies I can sell directly, the lower I can make the cover price) along with comments on what you would like to see in the next issue and I will send you a information on the next issue when it is ready.

Qua Brot?!
Kyle Hailey

Repaying the Debt

A Keynote Editorial

By Kim Thompson

There are those that will ask, what relevance does EC have to the 1980s? Why bother digging up and poking at a company whose total combined output is matched by Marvel Comics every year? Isn't it about time we got on to something new?

Well, sir, the fact of the matter is, EC was the most potent force ever in American comics. (Perhaps I should rephrase that to accommodate enormities like Superman: the most potent positive force. I regard Superman as an anchor around comics' neck, you see.) In fact, I would go on to say that every major trend in current comics has its root in the EC explosion in the early Fifties.

Overstatement? Not at all. I submit:

* The first comics producer to break the stranglehold of the Comics Code in the late Sixties was Jim Warren--with a line of comics whose style, content, and even personnel were lifted entirely from EC.

* Stan Lee's early Marvel comics boasted an ambiance straight out of old EC--the idea of showcasing writers and artists of stars, of treating the reader like co-conspirators in some marvelous game, and of (gasp!) not writing down to their audience.

* There is no question that the entire underground comics phenomenon is traceable to EC comics in general, and Harvey Kurtzman's Mad in particular. The earliest work from the seminal Robert Crumb is straight Mad pastiche; and the sensibility that courses through most major undergrounds included EC's unique concatenation of moral outrage, ball-busting courage, seriousness of intent and near-cynical hipness.

* The art in the EC comics may seem horribly conservative in these days of exploding panel design, but work like that of Harvey Kurtzman and Bernie Krigstein is still teaching lessons to today's generation of comics artists.

...And the ripples spread beyond these cause-and-effects. The Underground begat the "ground level," and that begat the direct-sales market and all that entails. The EC phenomenon did not even stay on one continent: The EC-influenced undergrounds were partly responsible for the Seventies comics revolution in Europe, and that boiled back across the sea to manifest itself in Heavy Metal.

All this because Bill Gaines decided to treat the company that providence had dropped in his lap like the world's biggest model train.

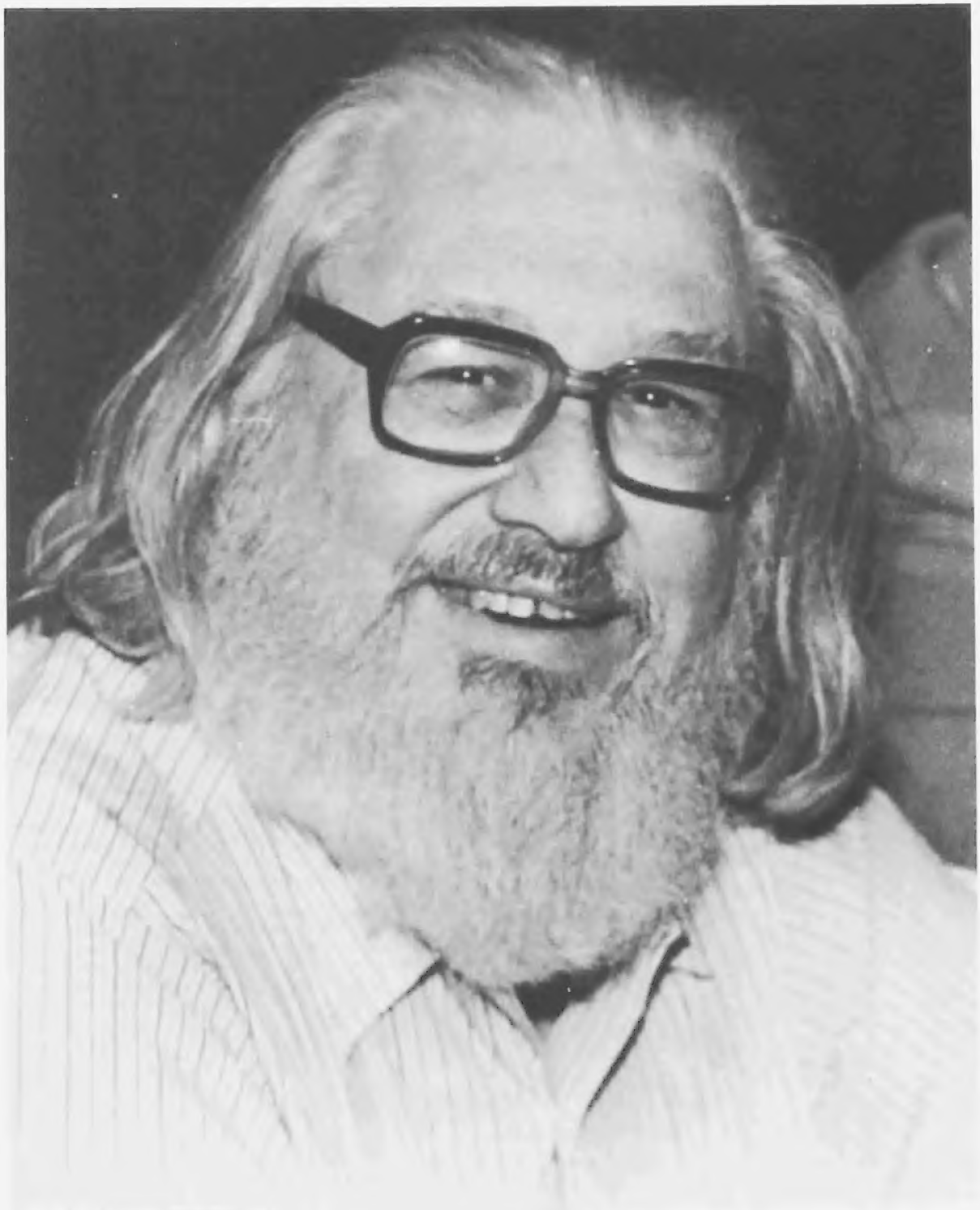
Let's face it: If EC hadn't existed, chances are every post-Fifties comic book in your collection would be noticeably different-and many simply would not exist. Would there have been an underground at all without Mad? Or a Warren? Would Stan Lee have started relating to his reader's needs the way he did? Would Berni Wrightson and Richard Corben have gotten into comics at all? (And if they had, what kind of work would they have done?) Would Philippe Druillet and Moebius have founded the "Humanoides Associes"?

It is hard to tell. Maybe something else would have happened--some other surge of creativity and integrity. But EC is what happened, and EC is still there for us to observe--in the original comics, in Cochran's superb reprint series, and in retrospective features like Qua Brot.

We need to remember EC not only for the comics it produced (splendid though many of them are), but also because EC's creators said We can do this although it has never been done before and went ahead and did it, and that is the most precious gift a creator can bestow upon his fellow creators and their audience. We are all still repaying our debts to Bill Gaines and his Madmen. This article and this magazine are only yet another fractional repayment.

Squa Tront!

WILLIAM GAINES



QB: Your father played a primary role in the creation of comic books and in the history of the industry. What are your memories of your father and the early days of comics?

Gaines: Well, my father, and I'm going back even a little before my memories to maybe before I was born, started out to be a schoolteacher. As a matter of fact, he became the principal of a small elementary school in Dubois, Pennsylvania, which is where he met my mother who was a teacher in that school. He was a Bronx boy, and she was a country girl. He courted and won her. He went into a variety of things then. He worked in a munitions factory at one point. He had a small, unsuccessful haberdashery store in Pennsylvania in the early 1920's. I was born in 1922, and some of this stuff happened before I was born, I guess. Finally, he got into the advertising business. He worked for a company which, if I recall, was called Askin-Marine. They are long since out of business. I think they went under during the Depression. One of my early memories, which would have been about 1930, was of his coming home and reporting that he lost his job. This being the depth of the Depression, my mother got mildly hysterical. This was followed some months later by our moving up into the Bronx - from a modest home in Brooklyn, in Flatbush, then up into the Bronx into an apartment building and into a small apartment that was owned by my grandmother. I guess we lived there rent free for two years. At this point, I know he became involved in doing a book on the Bible with pictures. This was not the one which was later a comic. This was a book 15 inches square which was, as I recall, bound in maroon, imitation leather. It consisted of text on the left, and black and white, engraved plates, on the right. I guess it was the Old Testament. Unfortunately, I have none of these, and I've never seen one in a secondhand shop.

QB: As a boy, did you have a good relationship with Max Gaines? Were you interested in any way in his work when he began working with comic books?

Gaines: No, no. I was too young. He started in comics in the very early Thirties. I would have been 10 or 11 years old. My father, as part of his advertising experience after he left his job, started selling printing for a printer in Bridgeport, Conneticut. One of the things that these people dreamed up, and my father was in on it with some others, was to reprint Sunday comics from newspapers in one-fourth size. They were printed on a regular comics press, then folded twice to give you the comic-book size. The comic-book size was originally exactly one-fourth of a newspaper Sunday comic supplement. They were putting out eight or 16-page pamphlets, and even 32-page books with covers, strictly as advertising premiums. Some of the very early ones were Famous Funnies, Cavalcade of Comics, and titles of that nature. They were made either for someone as a premium, or giveaway, or they were made as a general premium that anyone could use by putting their name on the backs of them.

QB: After your father's death, you took over in 1947.

Max and Jessie Gaines at their home in White Plains, 1946.

Gaines: We're leaping way ahead by about 16 years.

QB: What influences did you bring with you to comics?

Gaines: Movies, books and radio. In my youth, I was an aficionado of horror pulps, and science fiction pulps. I used to read Horror Stories, Terror Tales, Astounding Stories, Amazing Stories, and all the pulps that were around when I was a kid. On the radio there were things such as The Witch's Tales, and later, Suspense and Inner Sanctum. In 1950, when Feldstein and I were kicking around story ideas and at that point publishing things like War Against Crime, Crime Patrol, Gunfighters, Modern Love and Saddle Romance, we just agreed that it would be fun to put out some stuff like the old Witch's Tales.

Qua Brot: When your New Trend titles became very successful and imitators sprang up everywhere, did these imitations make you angry, flattered, or insulted?

Gaines: Flattered and angered. It's always flattering to be imitated, but when your livelihood depends on it, it's something to be

angry about because we were in no position, putting out quality material, to do what some of the others did. We put out three horror magazines, and we never ever put out a fourth. Marvel Comics, in those days, was run by Martin Goodman. I think they put out thirty horror titles. While they couldn't compete with ours, in a sense, just in pure volume they overwhelmed us and did cut down on the sales we might have achieved. We still had a respectable sale of about 400,000, which in those days, considering we were with the weakest distributor in the country, was pretty good. But still it would have been a lot higher if we had not had all of that competition. And when I say thirty comics, that was just Marvel. There were many others.

QB: You have fought for freedom of the press since the days of McCarthy. Why did you stand and fight when most of your peers in the industry scattered like leaves?

Gaines: I think you're giving us too much credit, more than we deserve. What we did was fight for the right to publish what we had been publishing. There was good, economic reason for that. It was our livelihood, and we didn't want to be put out of business. We ultimately were, except for Mad, and I was just lucky to have this ace-in-the-hole that came about almost by accident. And I ultimately had to drop all the comics except Mad, which by that time was no longer a comic.

QB: One of the reasons Mad was converted to a magazine format was to excape the Comics Code Authority.

Gaines: This is not true. Everybody thinks that, but this is not true. The reason that I changed Mad from a comic to a 25 cent magazine is that I didn't want to lose Harvey Kurtzman. The lucky side effect, of course, is that by doing that, I did escape the Code. But I didn't do it to avoid the Code. That never would have occured to me.

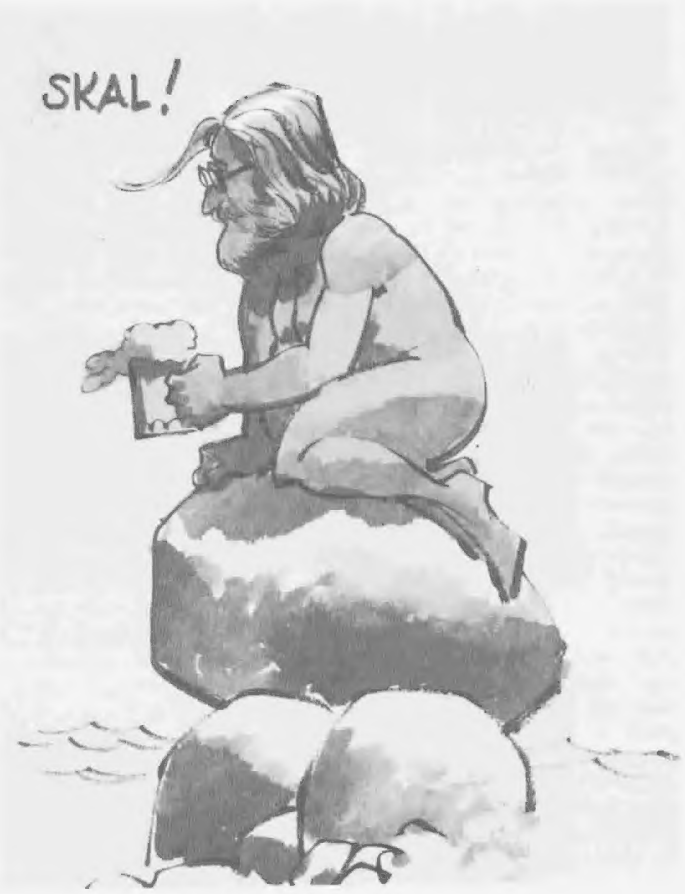
QB: Why do you think the Code has never been challenged in a court of law? It wouldn't hold up very long.

Gaines: There is nothing to challenge legally because the Code is voluntary. There was nothing then that legally said you had to join the Association. Therefore, there was nothing legally to fight about. The problem was that if you didn't join the Association, 700 independent wholesalers and 100,000 dealers would not handle the magazine.

QB: Since superheroes have been the staple of the industry almost from the beginning, why have you never published a superhero title?

Gaines: Because I never had any interest in superheroes. I published what I enjoyed, with the exception of Harvey Kurtzman's war books, where I let Harvey publish what he enjoyed. The horror books, the suspense books and the science fiction books were things that I enjoyed as a child, and which I loved and wanted to publish.

QB: Why in the Fifties and Sixties, was Mad called anti-American and even communistic by some?



Gaines as Copenhagens *Little Mermaid*, by Jack Davis.

Gaines: Well, because Mad was non-conformist, and Mad was, you might say, rebellious and appealed to and called upon the readers and the kids to think for themselves and question some of the things their elders had laid down as law. Naturally, the elders resented this, and as people do, when you hate something, you call it a name. The name to call things then was "communistic." This is what got me into the "Red Dupe" controversy because I was, in effect, kidding the people who were doing that kind of thing by doing the same thing myself. It just didn't come off.

QB: Is there a general philosophy behind Mad that shapes its format?

Gaines: No.

QB: What role does Feldstein play as editor of Mad? Does he have the final okay?

Gaines: Oh, yes! Mad is done just a little bit differently from most other publications. It is really a writer-oriented magazine. With the exception of movies and TV shows, Al never assigns topics to writers. They come to us with things they want to do. They have story conferences, and they present three, four, five, six ideas, and the staff kicks them around and takes the ones they like. He might work on it a little bit with the writer to change the direction a little. The writer then goes home and writes them. At this

Gaines with Al Feldstein and a display of EC comics of the Horror days.

point, they go through Feldstein's typewriter. He rewrites everything that goes into Mad, copycasting it simultaneously, which is an incredible feat. Copycasting is where the lines in the captions end up exactly square, no ragged ends. This doesn't just happen! It all has to be carefully thought out. Al doesn't have one of these new, super typewriters that does it for you. Al is definitely the editor of Mad. It is a reflection of his work.

QB: What role do you play in the creative life of Mad?

Gaines: The business end. Al and I have now been together since 1948. We have great rapport. A week can go by when we don't even talk to each other because what he does and what I do are so separated that we rarely have to confer on anything. He knows what I would like. I maybe twice a year change something. Just the other day, I changed something, so I can give you an example. Normally, I would be hard pressed to tell you something I changed. We did a Mad special about cops, politicians, teachers and "other dishonest professions." A sub-line then says "so and so about these idiots." And I said, "Al, it's bad enough that we're calling cops and teachers dishonest! Let's not call them idiots." So we changed it to "clods". That's the kind of thing. So there's really not that much for me to do. Al does it all, and Mad is definitely a reflection of Feldstein. Roughly knowing the direction I would want it to go, but doing it all himself.

QB: If you could roll back time to the mid Fifties, and the final days of your four-color comics, would you change anything?

Gaines: I probably wouldn't. What happened was due to public pressure, I was forced to drop my whole original line of EC comics, and we substituted a whole new line of EC comics. The aficionados differentiate these by calling them the New Trend books which were replaced by the New Direction books. Despite the fact that I ultimately joined the Association, the wholesalers were still so angry with me that they continued returning my comics back to me unopened. Now today, that's being done too, but today it's an economic problem. In those days, that wasn't done normally. They were doing it to me because it was a political problem. So what did I do wrong? What would I change? There's nothing I could have changed. I got myself into a situation where I could no longer publish comics because I could no longer distribute them.

QB: Let's play name association. Your first thoughts. Al Feldstein?

Gaines: The picture he did of me as an angel which appeared in Mad #5.

QB: Harvey Kurtzman.

Gaines: The picture he did of me as a devil.

QB: Wally Wood.

Gaines: Wood was a tremendously talented urchin. A little, mischevious urchin.

QB: Jack Davis.

Gaines: A dear, sweet, wonderful, incredibly talented man.

QB: Angelo Torres.

Gaines: Torres. Angelo has come along, and is one of our most popular artists now, second only to Mort Drucker. And to be second to Mort Drucker is no dishonor because Drucker, who is probably your next name, is so talented, so wonderful. Like Davis, he's sweet, gentle and loved by everyone. Some of these guys like Davis, Drucker and DeBartolo don't have enemies. And who doesn't have enemies?

QB: Will you ever revive one of the old four-color EC titles as a newsstand comic?

Gaines: There is no chance of that because comics are a very poor busines. The only way comics stay in business, I think, is through subsidiary money. They manage to sell foreign rights, and they manage to sell television shows, and, as in the case of Superman, wonderful and very lucrative movies.

I would like to revive a title once, just for fun. But I don't know if I could ever talk Al Feldstein into it because Al is as lazy as I am, and not at all nostalgic about the EC days. He lives for today. But I'd love to get Al to sit down with me and plot out four new stories. Just the other night I was talking to my girlfriend and told her I already have the artists picked. They would be Jack Davis, Jack Kamen, George Evans and Joe Orlando.

QB: You don't think you could get Graham Ingels to do it?

Gaines: I know I couldn't get Graham Ingels, and Wally Wood is gone. And Kurtzman would never do it. I could certainly get those four, and maybe one or two others to put out one more whopping issue of Tales From The Crypt, and put it out without the Code Seal! I'd do it to get it out of my system. Because I've come up with many, many new story ideas.

SEDUCTION
of the
INNOCENT

THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT

BY DON EDWARDS

In Europe, comics are displayed in the Louvre, are read avidly by adults and have attained a remarkable literary quality and artistic sophistication. American comic art enthusiasts however, are still striving for greater acceptance and higher standards. They are tired of the references to "Pop Art" and "camp," believing comics to truly be an art form with unlimited potential. This is evident in The Complete EC Library (Russ Cochran), with its lingering shadows of what America once could do with pen and ink, straight from the blacklist era of the Fifties. The Cochran series is a publishing event to warm the hearts of all diehard radicals, and lovers of fine comic art, for, yes, these are the same EC stories that caused all the trouble back in the Rosenberg's period of the uptight early Fifties. ECs that once sold for a dime on newsstands now command collector prices of $30 to $500 for a single issue. These are the wildly creative, books that whipped the infamous Comics Code Authority into a foaming frenzy. They are the same comic books that once were exhibited before a Senate sub-committee with Estes Kefauver in the forefront.

They were the forbidden fruit, comics our parents did not want us to read, comics the publishing establishment wanted most to exorcise—EC's horror and science fiction, the darkly moralistic commentary in Shock SuspenStories and the social satire of Harvey Kurtzman's Mad. Yes, the Comics Code Authority hated them and was deeply disturbed by them. But while they were unshackled and uncensored, for a few short years, EC comics towered as the greatest line of American comic books ever published.

The enlightened reader of EC reprints will no doubt wonder if the average freedom-loving citizen is cognizant of the process by which, history has demonstrated, a free nation becomes a dictatorship. The initial step is censorship. And more often than not, this begins innocently enough with the reading matter for adolescents, as was the case in Nazi Germany.

Out of the McCarthy era of the early Fifties, fermented from a sickening profundity of fear and hate, warped psychiatrists, a senseless Congressional investigation, and a national best-seller, Dr. Fredric Wertham's Seduction of the Innocent, emerged the reprehensible Comics Code Authority which did then and does today proclaim itself "the strictest code for any communications medium anywhere," as though this was something to boast about.

To meet the Code's requirements, publishers found it a necessity to create inane, childish stories or to go out of business. It was the rape of the American comics industry. Creativity was squashed. Don't underestimate the power of the Comics Code Authority which drove EC out of the business, except for Mad. What saved Mad from the Code's chopping block censorship was its transition from a small color comic book to an enlarged black-and-white format. Such a magazine was out of the Code's jurisdiction.

As an aspiring freelance writer of comic book scripts, I often receive rejection slips and a reprimanding finger shaken in my face, along with still another copy of the Comics Code for my leisurely edification.

Yet creativity in all its unbridled beauty cannot be abandoned, even in this youthful graphic art medium. Feeling the freedom of expression, the freedom to pursue the happiness of that feeling, the freedom of the press, the freedom of speech cannot be defiled by a suffocating code of censors.

Censorship seems incredibly incongruous to the basic concepts of our constitutional freedoms. Subsequently, censorship authorities of the spectrum of children's syrupy sweet pablum called "kid entertainment," on the whole, borders clumsily on the mundane and the ridiculous. Authors, TV networks, publishers and artists have, more or less, always personally policed their own endeavors in an effort to give young people what they consider sound entertainment, conducive to vigorous well-being. I didn't say snow white wholesome. Life is not all lily-white, and most stable young minds accept this reality. When we start forming "do good" committees to tell us what we can or cannot perceive as "sound" for the majority in any medium, we are marching toward the oblivion of Orwell's "Big Brother is Watching" concept.

Can 1984 be far away? It was April, 1954, when a much younger William M. Gaines testified before the Senate of the United States, then conducting investigations into juvenile delinquency. They pointed accusing fingers in Gaines' direction, inferring that his high-quality comics intimidated young Johnny to steal hubcaps. Gaines thought he was producing enjoyable thought-provoking tales in the tradition of H. P. Lovecraft and H. G. Wells. The television news media rolled their cameras, and, with this publicity against him, Gaines was unable to continue publishing his entire line with one exception. Only Mad remains to this day, still under Gaines capable reins.

In a world that celebrates so avidly the merits and delights of Star Wars and Star Treks, it is strange indeed that such a body of work that encompasses the EC nova is so largely unheralded. The artwork and writing of recognized masters--Al Feldstein, Jack Davis (who later went on to become the publishing industry's leading humor illustrator), Frank Frazetta (who has evolved into something of a modern day Michelangelo with his remarkable paintings), Wallace Wood, Al Williamson and Graham Ingels--was featured in these publications, and was wildly beyond equivalent publishers. Yet the work was soon deemed a bit too ghastly and horrifying for "public consumption," as the censoring Code and Kefauver Senate Sub-committee declared. Newsdealers refused distribution of EC Comics, and parents often confiscated copies. Comics and other youthful literature just slightly esoteric, of every title and description, was tossed into trashcans by well-meaning moms while Bobby was away. Soon, neighborhood youngsters were without their favorite reading material. Was it imagination on my part or did all literature begin to move furtively? Were eyes really beginning to focus accusingly on all slightly controversial reading matter? Yes, even adult? Our guilt, apparently, was beyond anything conceived by Freud. We were looking for Communist plots down every drainpipe and under every bed. Remember the good ol' Fifties?

EC comic books, at times violently and shockingly illustrated, did indeed have redeeming values. They were intellectually stimulating, beautiful in execution of artistic intangibles, poetic, magnificently entertaining and often educational. Anyone who knows the books, also knows that the stories actually taught to stable minds the ugliness of violence because they were, in fact, extremely anti-violent, anti-war. When you read the farce between the lines, the message came through loud and clear.

Compare EC to the trash quality of the comics glutting the stands today. A high quality comic doesn't exist anymore. In a few years, the comic book will be dead, forever...unless...

And remember, 30 years have elapsed. The Comics Code Authority still exists, ruining potentially excellent high literary standards, values, continuing their extreme anxiety-ridden censorship. Write to any comics publisher, and ask him to send you a copy of the Comics Code. It's short, and looks rather mild on paper, but it is devastating to the artist, to the writer and to the soul.

Gold Key Comics, publishers of Walt Disney comic books, refuse to carry the seal of approval of the Code on any of their covers. Reasoning that the name "Disney" is an obvious label of standards, this company does not want or need the Code's seal. I understand that the Comics Code Authority has been, and still is, very upset about it. They are worried that it might start a New Trend among other publishers.

THE LAST INGELS FOLIO ?

Controversial cover by Graham Ingels for the spring 1944 issue, volume 2, no. 6, reprinted twice before in Squa Tront no. 5 and Fanfare no.4. Reprinted here again, because it is appropriate for this article, and to help readers draw their own comparason responses to the letter section reprinted here from the fall 1944 issue of Planet.

To date, there have been two articles published on the pulp artwork contributed by Graham Ingels. The first appeared in John Benson's Squa Tront #5 dated 1974. The other (more definitive) article was published in Fanfare #4 in 1981 by Bill Spicer, written by Bhob Stewart. Benson, Spicer and Stewart, all three EC Fan-Addicts from the first generation of EC fandom, would probably agree that enough of Ingel's work for the pulps has already been documented. But there is that handful of diehard Ingel's devotees/collectors who consistently crave to see more of his artwork reproduced, especially the science fiction material.

Between the Squa Tront and Fanfare articles, 16 pulp illustrations were reprinted, covering the titles of Planet Stories, Action Stories, Wings, Northwest Romances, and Jungle Stories. This leaves a total of 9 illustrations from Planet Stories which we feel certain have not seen the light of day since they were first published around 1944 and 1945. Hence, this portfolio. At least it can now be verified, and many years of personal research back this statement up — there are no other Ingels illos to be reproduced from Planet Stories . This is the last of them.

Once again, for the reader's convenience, we are reproducing the Spring 1944 cover of Planet Stories. Extensive research has proven this to be the only painting which Graham contributed to Planet, and most EC Fan-Addicts will agree, the cover has merit. Published letters from the readers of that Spring 1944 issue of Planet had their own opinions about this particular cover. It's interesting to note that in the Fall issue of Planet, the letter section (called "The Vizigraph") contained a barrage of letters condemning Ingels' cover painting. No doubt, influenced by the readers' negative response to Graham's cover, he was not allowed to do anymore. It's ironic that Fiction House editors did not have the patience or insight to recognize or develop the unique talents of this young oil painter for future cover assignments. It's our loss of course, not that of Fiction House. What could have been, will never be.

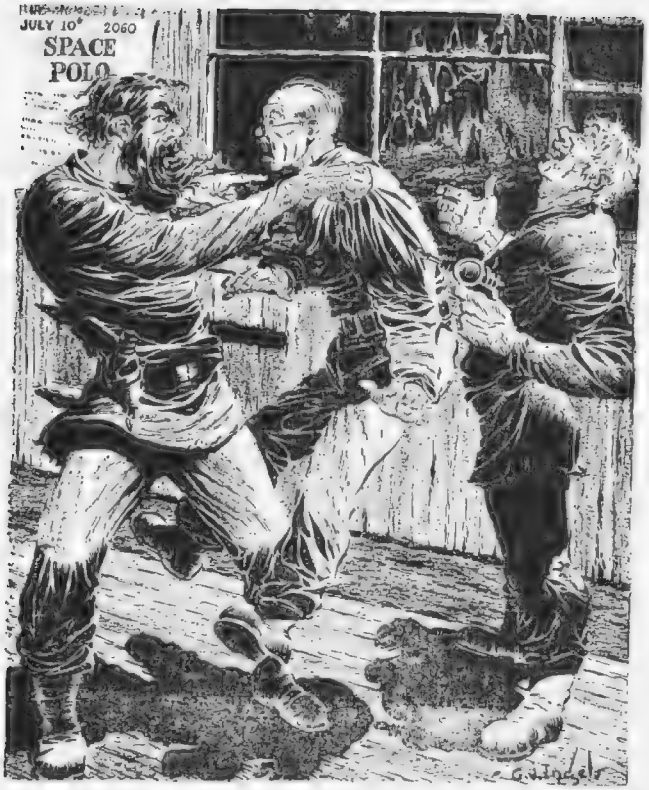
As a finale to this portfolio, and for curiosity's sake only, we are publishing excerpts from some of the derogatory letters originally published in the fall 1944 issue of Planet. These excerpts are in no way meant to belittle the good reputation of Graham Ingels. Simply accept them for what they are, honest criticism, over 40 years old, of a man's talent, who went on to become the most appreciated purveyor of horror in the history of comics.

Chas. McNutt
When I first saw the cover, nestled snugly in with the Dime Detective, Gory Mysteries and Bloody Bushwa I was startled to say the least. Dazedly I searched for the name and sure enough, as big as pie "G.I. Ingels" on the bottom as though he were proud of the painting. Hah. "G.I." is right. These P.S. babes you continually sport always seem to be able to rip and tear their clothing everywhere but the right places. All joking and Ackerpunning aside, it was by far your worst cover, including Drake, and that's really gettin bad.

Paul Carter
In the Spring, a young man's fancy turns to Planet Stories -- but not if the cover is like the one for Spring 1944. Once again the guy, the gal, and the goons, and such a smeared job that they all resemble goons of one kind or another. Do you honestly think she would attract readers? That too-heavily made up face, that expression, that -- shall we exaggerate and call it hair" Arrraagh.

By Roger Hill

Planet Stories, fall, June -- Aug., 1945, volume 2, no.12.



Planet Stories, fall 1944, volume 2, no. 8.

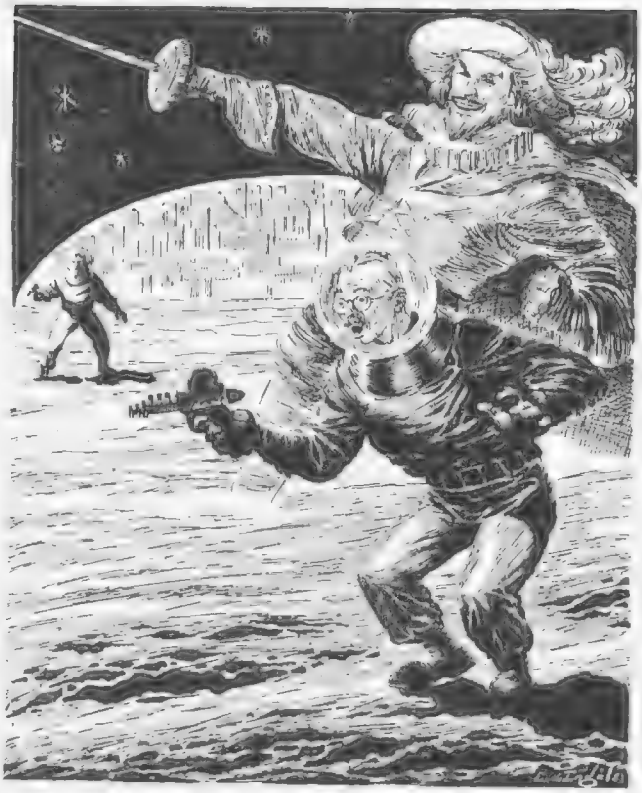
Rose Jacobwitz
The cover was — as seems to be customary — very inaccurate. Ingels isn't a bad artist, but he doesn't begin to compare with Rosen.

Bill Terrio
Let's start with the cover. It stinks, the colors are too lurid and flashy. Cheap looking.

Planet Stories, fall 1944, volume 2, no.6.

Doctor Universe

By CARL JACOBI



Planet Stories, summer 1944, volume 2, no.7. Upper right illustration was Ingels' caricature parody of Planet's editor of the time, Paul Payne.

Bunny Emery
Now on to my opinion of the cover. It is shot, it is out of proportion, and does not look like any of the stories I read in the book. Perhaps it belongs to some future issue, or some past issue I missed.

Kathleen Maunsbach
The cover? It was the sloppiest looking thing I've ever seen on any magazine. Please give us something that resembles a good picture.

Planet Stories, spring 1944, volume 2, no.6.

ORLANDO ODYSSEY

Joe Orlando was born in Bari, Italy, on April 4, 1927. Joe's parents, who migrated to the United States just two years later, little suspected that their son was to become one of the most respected artists and ideamen in the comic art world. They did start him on the right track, however, by settling in New York City, the Vatican of the comics.

Like so many other top cartoonists, Joe attended the High School of Industrial Arts where he studied illustration. He then fell victim to the draft and served time in the Occupation Army of Europe. Army life had its compensations; upon returning to the USA in 1947, Joe wasted no time in taking advantage of the GI Bill, studying at the Art Students League under the noted illustrator and popular teacher Frank Reilly. Between classes, Joe began doing freelance comic book work, notably "Chuck White" for Treasure Chest. As his freelance career snowballed, he began working with Wallace Wood, assisting with inking and backgrounds and sharing Wood's studio above a Spanish dance club. "We met up in New York in the office of an agent. I liked his inking; he liked my pencils so we started working together." At this point a black page appeared in Joe's illustrating career. Disheartened by a bad experience with an unscrupulous publisher, the disappointed Orlando abandoned comic books in favor of a job as a stock clerk.

© 1985 William Gaines

Luckily, Joe relented and soon began slaving over the Wood drawing board once again. Initially, Joe and Wally worked for the Avon Comics group. Most of their efforts were Avon Fantasy Classics, such as "An Earthman on Venus" and "Space Detective." One of their better productions was "The Mask of Fu Manchu" based on Sax Rohmer's mysterious Oriental archvillain. Within the same year or so, the Orlando-Wood team also turned out "Captain Science" for Youthful Magazines. Captain Science was, in reality, Gordon Dane, who remained in his Earth laboratory in 1950 for all of three panels in any given story before then zipping into outer space with his kid assistant Rip and his girlfriend Luana. To even the most casual observer of their early work the style is very much Wally Wood's, although not the Wally Wood we know today. The Wood-Orlando art is work of quality, but it does not display the fluent brush technique that is now evident in every Wood-supervised job. The composition is excellent but somewhat cluttered. The figures, featuring in many cases the stock Wood poses of today, show an almost subliminal Alex Raymond touch, and the influence of Reed Crandall on Wood's art is very apparent. Both the Avon and the Youthful efforts were hints of stylistic mastery yet to come.

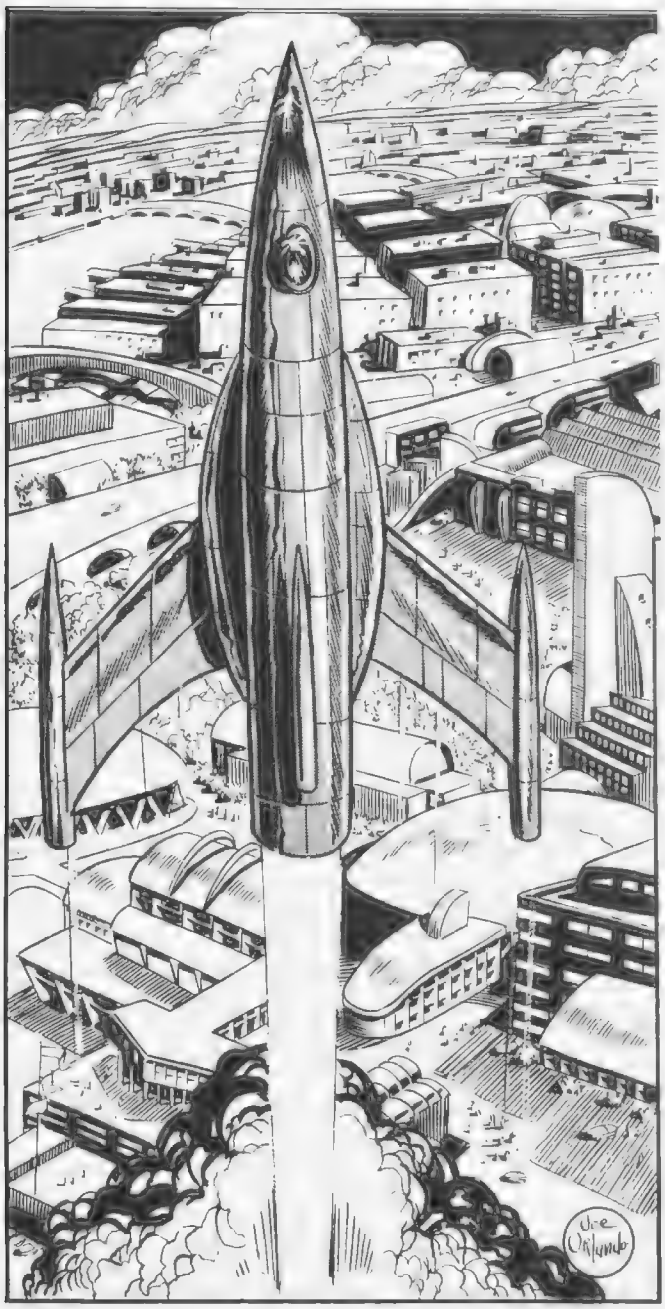
It happened when Joe came to EC. "After Wally Wood got a job at EC, he told me how they liked his work so much and that they were looking for other artists. I went up with a penciled page. Actually I was pretty lucky; Wally's inking was so good, to my mind, that I did not want to ink my own pencils. I showed Al Feldstein my pencils—I forget what excuse I made up about why I could not get to the inking. I was fortunate that he gave me the job without seeing the inks. When I inked it I still hated it, but they loved it." At EC Joe's inking became sharper. The details came into focus. The clutter began to disappear. Dramatic lighting was a key factor in the elegance and style of the Wood work. Joe's early solo work at EC was very similar to that of Wood's. The facial expressions, the inking technique, panel compositions and especially the construction of the figures and clothes--all were Woodish. Orlando had learned much from Wood, but soon his inking style softened. His figures began to lose that carved out, solid look. Faces elongated, and the treatment of mouths changed. In only a few issues Orlando's personal style was instantly recognizable.

Like his friend and colleague, Joe's first love was EC's pacesetting science fiction. Pacesetting is truly the word for Orlando's

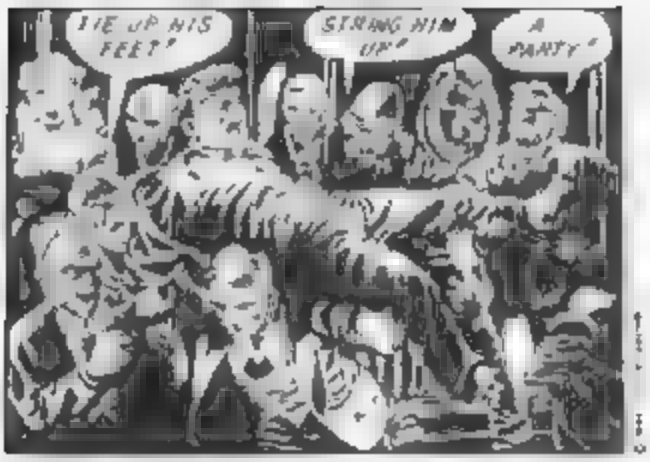
While Orlando changed many elements of his artwork and went through many phases, his women remain constantly stylish.

ALL RIGHT! FIRE FORWARD ROCKETS! SLOW SHIP TO ONE THOUSAND! WE'RE GOING INTO THE SAME FREE-FALL SPEED...
ARE WE GOING TO BOARD HER, COMMANDER CORWIN?

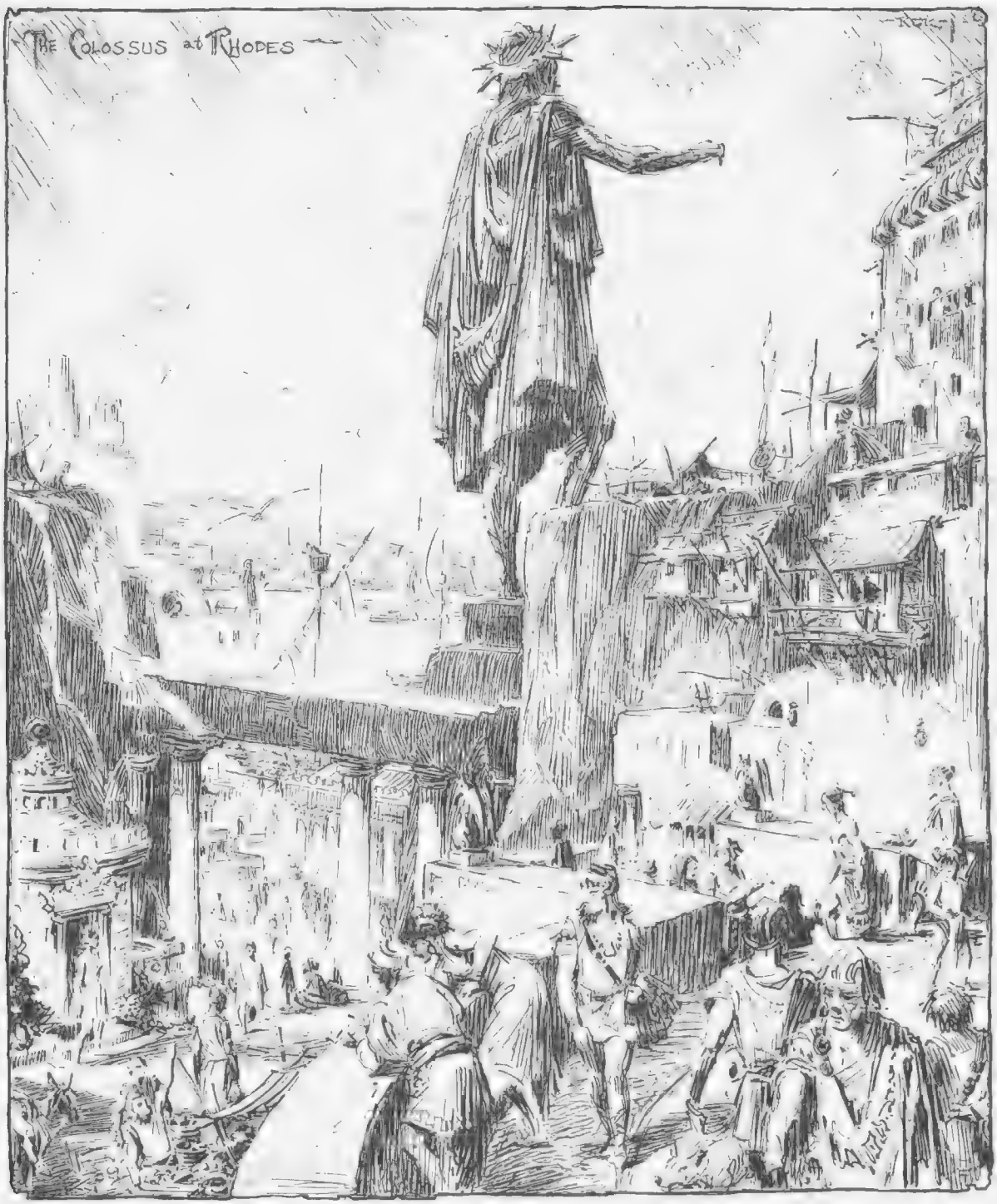
Joe Orlando's rockets developed steadily from his first story in Weird Fantasy 9 at the top right to the much later Weird Fantasy 17 at the bottom left to Weird Fantasy 22 below.



© 1985 William Gaines



Martin L. Green and Bob


The Colossus at Rhodes

A FEW LESS PEOPLE AT THE TABLE

by BHOB STEWART

I'm sitting here thinking about RGK. Outside it is blistering, a heat not unlike the sun over the Land of Shin'ar beating down centuries ago on the streets and back byways in the royal city of Akkad. Inscriptions on the Akkadian tablets in the library of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh could just as well apply to RGK;

> Secret things he has seen;
> What is hidden from Man, he found out.
> He even brought tidings
> of the time before the Deluge;
> He also took the distant journey,
> wearisome and under difficulties.
> He returned, and upon a stone column
> all his toil he engraved.

The art of RGK encompassed it all—from eons before the dawn of man to the here and now to "Those Happy Days to Come." In the here and now, in the air-conditioned coolness of this trendy, plastic cafe, I sit and think of RGK, remembering. Thinking of RGK means the chattering waitresses, the fork on the floor, the mindless bleat of soft rock singers from hidden speakers, the plastic tables, the poorly designed interior, the Bolla sign, the false ceiling and the Old Crow plaque all dissolve away, and I am standing beneath the Colossus of Rhodes, setting sail from the harbor of Tyre, ascending the Tower of Babylon, listening to the oracular omphalos with other sun-worshippers atop the 500-ton stones of Baalbek.

Researchers can research, writers can describe, archaeologists can dig and map, but RGK resurrected crumbling ruins from dust and made them new, gave them life, populated rooms, balconies, halls, temples and streets with ordinary people going about their daily chores. He sent armadas off to battle. He stared into the snarling jaws of long extinct creatures. And he could do this on a sheet of typing paper with a ballpoint pen. He could do it on a cocktail napkin, and if you told him some slimy 15-year-old hustler had just sold that napkin for $50, he would smile and say, "Why not?"

So I'm sitting here, thinking of RGK, and this plastic place is the right spot. Because, thinking of RGK, I can make it vanish, poof, like that, make it go away. So I'm sitting here in this jungle, thinking of RGK, listening to the sounds of water dripping over the leafy fronds in this rain forest.

Earlier this morning, preparing to write about RGK, I sat at a table in an empty Indian restaurant, ordered a beer and found I was floating on a barge down the Ganges, traveling through the Magadaha kingdom with the majestic spires of Pataliputra gleaming in the distance. To write about RGK I wanted to find the right spot, but when the Indian waiter brought the beer, he expressed dismay that I wasn't ordering a meal--"This is not a bar." I remembered the opening scene of Gandhi and smiled at the irony of this Indian waiter hassling me. Practicing nonviolent resistance, I still refused to order a meal. He left me alone, and I sipped the beer, freely associating that RGK was the art world's answer to Gandhi--laughing at life, offering art instruction to anyone who sought him out, wearing sneakers in the Manhattan snows, going against the grain to do the drawings he assigned himself rather than the jobs art directors wanted him to do. He truly transcended all categorizations of "fine art" and "commercial art."

Why did his friend Frazetta become the Famous Artist while RGK remained in the background after his initial Ace Books blitz of the sixties? Because RGK, as he explained it to me, did the minimal amount of commercial work that would give him just enough to live on so he could spend his time drawing his own ideas--with no one to please other than himself. So if you allow that thought, it almost becomes clear, doesn't it?, that commercial art can often be a form of

Photo of RGK taken by Ken Barish in 1971

prostitution--but that RGK was an artist who, like Slavko Vorkapich in Hollywood, had found a way to beat the system. Think about it. And after you think about it, look again at Cities & Scenes from the Ancient World and his other work. Sanford Zane Meschkow wrote that "Roy G. Krenkel draws in a sort of Classic, fine-art, Old Master style that is rarely seen these days," and this is a comment that steers us off the pop culture rapids into RGk's narrow tributary. Through his collecting and study of illustrators, in some miraculous fashion, RGK played a large role in reviving the dead or dying artform of the illustrated book and, almost single-handedly, he kept alive the look and feel of line art from the Golden Age of Illustration. He was a time traveler, bringing the past into the present.

These are the things that pass through my mind as I sit here drinking and thinking about RGK, the man Ken Feduniewicz dubbed "the spiritual godfather of us all"—a remark which only prompted RGK to shoot back, "Boy! I don't know! That sounds like a lot of crap to me!"-- just like Gandhdi repudiating the title Mahatma (which means "great souled"). But, talking with Feduniewicz, Al Williamson seconded the motion: "Oh, yeah! He's definitely responsible for my knowledge of all the great illustrators of old. If it had not been for Roy, I wouldn't know who J. C. Coll was or Matania or Norman Lindsay or any of those guys! Jeff Jones--well, he was the kind of guy who would discover things on his own. But again, Krenkel was a catalyst there. Wrightson, Frazetta... He turned Frank on to the Old Masters. Frazetta didn't know who these guys were. So, actually, Roy really is--what did you call him the other day?-- 'the spiritual godfather to us all.'"

RGK is gone. Reed Crandall is gone. Creepy is gone. And yet if you look back at Creepy #1 you will find both of them there. And now I reach down in my briefcase and pull out a letter received only four hours ago from Creepy's founding editor, Russ Jones: "The news you sent was depressing about Roy and Reed. It seems that all the greats are going. Roy was a good friend, and I guess you and I will always remember the time we all sat together with Wally Wood at that convention in NYC. A few less people at the table now, huh? I wonder if Frazetta helped clear up Roy's affairs. He was the only one who really knew the extent of the RGK 'collection,' which is really something to behold. I wonder what became of it? It is a shame that ol' Roy never found his ultimate fat girl. I guess he went through his entire life without ever sleeping with a woman."

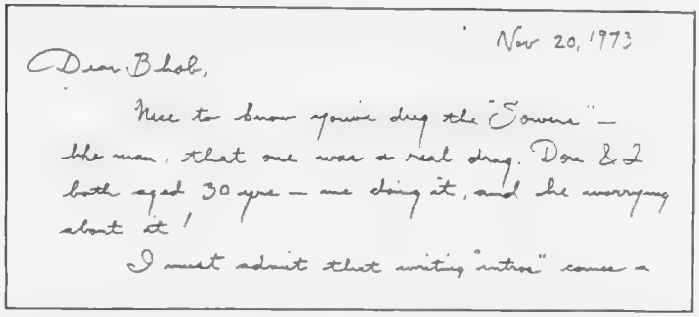
Of course, Russ, that's what I'm doing--sitting here and remembering. Yes, I remember that I sat at one end of the table with RGK to my left and Paula to my right. Woody was to her right, and you sat across from Woody. Later we were joined by Mike Ploog and Steranko, and even after Ploog and Steranko vanished, the five of us remained through the afternoon. The rest of the barroom was empty--until Jim Warren suddenly materialized, sitting on the other side of the room with a young woman. Warren refused to join us because you were at the table. Woody got more and more smashed, tried to talk Paula up to his room—while (your letter reminds me) Paula and RGK had an extended conversation about fat women. Then RGK related some tale of a recent opportunity to take LSD and asked me if I thought he should drop acid. I told him not to bother because he already had an expanded consciousness. Upstairs, in a vast temple of money-changers, the hustling of comic books went on for hours and hours, and we

ordered yet another round and yet another on and on for hours and hours. Yes, I remember. I remember the tensions in that room—and RGK immune to it all, just laughing and smiling, rapping forth his endless observations of life and art, on and on. Ah, you can't forget an afternoon like that, even if you can't quite nail down the year. 1972?

Well, I remember even earlier--1963, when Dick Lupoff asked me to adapt RGK's line art into two-color book jackets for Canaveral Press. And 1965 or 1966 when I was leaving the Arthur Brown art supplies store in NYC and glanced at the bulletin board where a pushpin held a file card note proclaiming a book desperately sought by RGK. This was the kind of bulletin board notice that had made RGK a legendary collector in NYC collecting circles.

And there are the letters. Yes, I remember the letters because I still have them. Here in the plastic cafe, transmogrified by my memories of RGK, it is 5 pm and the waitress is going off duty and the beer and the tuna salad have been consumed, the decibel level on the soft rock is rising as the nine-to-fivers fill up tables and the distant Athens Acropolis begins to seem more distant, the magnificence of Carthage fades into twilight mists and the world of 1984 is encroaching--but there are the letters. I have left the tip. I will finish the coffee. I will Xerox the letters. I will send them to Kyle. I will sit here and think about RGK. I will share these letters. They are not on file in a microfilm room above fund-raising dinners at the Archives of American Art, so I will share them with you the reader, since you've stayed with this so far, waiting for the smiles and laughter and arcana of RGK. The RGK gift to the world was not only his drawings and paintings, you see, but also sharing knowledge. And this then is what we will do.

RGK had two styles of letter-writing. For no apparent reason, some are in handwriting while some are printed. The printed ones are so clear and legible that we present them here directly from RGK's pen. In others, certain words close up in the handwriting, so these have been typeset. The first letter arrived during the period I was editing the never-published Volume Two of the EC Library for Woody Gelman's Nostalgia Press. I had solicited a number of written articles for this book by Bill Spicer, Ray Bradbury, Marty Greim, Bob Cosgrove and Steranko. I suggested that RGK write a memoir of his EC days, and this is the letter rejecting the notion. "Don" refers to publisher Donald Grant, and "Woody" is, of course, Woody Gelman, not Wally Wood.



Nov 20, 1973

Dear Bhob,

Nice to know you've dug the "Sowers"—like man, that one was a real drag. Don & I both aged 30 yrs — me doing it, and he worrying about it!

I must admit that writing "intros" comes a

An example of RGK's style of script which he used in two of the letters that have been typed out here.

Nov. 20, 1973

Dear Bhob,

Nice to know you've dug the "Sowers"--like man, that one was a real drag. Don and I both aged 30 years—me doing it, and he worrying about it!

I must admit that writing "intros" comes a hell of a lot easier than drawing--or, worse yet, painting--but--no thanks! Aside from being over my ears in damn-fool jobs (they've all ganged up at once, as usual!), I positively refuse to pontificate on comics! Seriously--it's like Nixon delivering an essay on ethics! Of all the peripheral workers in the "old days" I was the farthest from center. I still can't do comics, and illustration is pure Russian Roulette whenever I get stuck with it. Shameful to admit, I never paid much attention to comics (outside of collecting and admiring the great guys who do 'em) with the predictable result that my ignorance towers above Rushmore!

You'll have no trouble rounding up some other one of the old EC crew who can whip up a lucid line of chit-chat (they all have memories like elephants anyway)--and I hope to see your latest volume "kill 'em all!"

Cheers

Roy

A few months later this book had moved into the design stage. Still determined to have a contribution from RGK and knowing that he had previously done book design work for Woody Gelman, I hit on the idea of having him execute old-style illustrative borders for the title page and contents page. Whatever was described in my letter prompted him, two weeks later, to send me a rough. Note that he had begun work on the project--even though my use of the name "Woody," minus the last name, caused some confusion.

Roy G. Krenkel
176-39 133 Road,
Springfield Gdns, L.I.
New York, N.Y. 11434

June 18, 1974

Dear Bhob,

Re. your page-design request — (Jun. 6th) — - Hadn't idea one on this piece for weeks!, then- while hunting for bird swipes — found a woogeley weasel, or ermine, by Chas. Livingston Bull - that immediately set up a whole train of thought.

To quote Helmuth, (who spoke for "Boskone") Your information — (on this project) — was neither complete, nor conclusive!!

Much of the enclosed idea-layout — almost all of it, in fact — is based on my idea of your idea!

Precision is mandatory; you'll have to do some work! Send out a full-scale, page-size rough on cheapo paper. Rough in title — and tentative placement — along with author, editor - or any other large letterings. Block out any small, (text-weight lettering), as to presumed size-in-a-square (whether actually "square" — or oblong - is, of course of little significance. Size alone being important.)

Payment thru Woody — ??
Woody Gelman?
Wally Wood?

Include any additional information you can think of necessary to clear understanding — and return the rough

Cheers —
Roy G.

This letter made me aware that I was simply being too vague. I decided to be as specific as possible, not only following his request for a "page-size rough" but creating a stack of roughs, inked on layout paper. These indicated two very elaborate sf illustrations in a border design format, an end-of-book illustration (showing the ruins of NYC as seen from New Jersey) and several other small spot illustrations. Unfortunately, this assignment was ill-timed, as Gelman later explained to me that RGK was going through a work slowdown in the months after his mother's death. Time passed. Eventually, at Gelman's suggestion, I phoned RGK to see what was happening. He tried several tactics to turn down the job, at one point suggesting that the roughs were so tight that they could be used for the finished art, and also claiming that the assignment, as he viewed it, demanded Wally Wood brushwork. The conversation almost reached a stalemate, but when I finally was able to make it clear that only his artwork would fit, he relented and agreed. About the time I was hoping to see the finished art, it went directly from RGK to Gelman—so I never saw the drawings. A few years later Gelman died, the book was cancelled, and this RGK art went into limbo. Is it "lost" art? I don't know. I never saw my roughs again either.

In 1976 I began planning Ophemera. A request for art brought this response, along with answers to some questions about Franklin Booth.

Jan 20, 1976

Franklin Booth, of course — but wait! De Quincy? A guy named Lui Trugo, one of the few almost-on-the- -button Booth swipers, did a De Quincy — very dark pictures using bits & pieces from "The Flying Islands of the Night" and other Boothian sources, with some winged buildings, yet! I'm not so sure that Booth, himself ever did the "Opium Eater"

There's the big "Franklin Booth"—60 pictures, etc. From Robt. Frank—N.Y.—1926—or 7? And the "Flying Islands—" from Bobbs Merrill, somewhere around that same period. I've seen, (don't have!), 2 pages of--something--From what appears to have been a sort of Cinderella-type story—(Foppish costumes, pumpkinish coaches etc.)—mounted in an identical fashion with the plates in the "Flying Islands". Nobody—but nobody has ever been able to pin this "Lost" Book Down! He did a few tiny spot-decorations for a slim little volume of poetry titled, "Riley Roses"—along with, (I think?), Howard Chandler Christie—or one of that school of work. He did a fine "end paper" to a set of "classics"—"The Harvard Classics", I think.—(but I'm not certain) A kind of "Book-Book" on Travels-in-New-England had half a dozen, or less unBoothian spot decos------and---That's that!

There should be more—(seems reasonable!)—but no-one in the N.Y.P.L.—The Libr. of Cong—Fellow Booth nuts, are aware of 'em—if they actually exist/ Adds & Illos—from the 'Teens through the 20s & 30s—in such 'zines as Red Book, Cosmopolitan, American Mag., College Humor, Life, Vogue, Harpers Bazar, Country Life (U.S. not British), Woman's Home Companion, Ladies Home Journal, Liberty, etc, etc. A great 2-pg, "decorative-panel" spread—in colour—can be found in the Dec. 1916 issue of "Pictorial Review":(This one I'm still looking for for my own collection!)

Hell-of-a-note my not contacting you on those 5 pics. Woody, (I'd suppose), just picked 'em up one day when he was over-and I just assumed he'd take it from-there! Typical Gelmanian/Krenkellian operation. He is even more absent-minded than me—no small achievement.

No—No—No!—not for $35—not for $350—not for $35,000! I'm buried-now-under unfinished jobs. Intractible crap that will not-allow itself-to-be-completed!

Stuff "lying about" is another matter—I have boxes full! Check old "Amra's"—other "fan-zines": Select a few things—"like what you, maybe, could use." Such & such "type" of thing—this or that size & detail of thing—So & So a "shape," or format. Let me know—I'll search. I do get 'em back; in unsoiled condition—and—pronto!

Cheers—Roy

The next letter came with tape marks, smudges and crumpling--all done by RGK as an example of how his artwork had been mistreated in the past. The mystery of "Carre? Carbe?" was solved two years later when I learned this was the Disney background artist Nino Carbe (who had illustrated several classics for the Illustrated Editions publishers in the early Thirties). I later wrote a biographical piece on Carbe for Heavy Metal (April 1980), illustrated with a full-color Carbe oil painting from 1944. The RGK "Shining City" art mentioned as appearing on the back cover of Richard E. Geis' Alien Critic #9 (May 1974) is the same picture printed on the back cover of Cities and Scenes from the Ancient World—a Booth-influenced drawing executed around 1945.

Feb. 16 1976

I got tired of trying to "remember", (with my lousy memory the quotes are in correct form!), whereinell I had some doodles suitable for your project. Finally—did what I should have done in the first place—looked thru some 6 or 7 [redacted] boxes & pads full of 'em, and found "an-embarassment-of-riches! I used to keep these things in lumps—more or less sorted to subject matter, or to colour vs. Bl. & Wh., etc.—but, (at least once a month, as of right now for instance), I—or some visiting lunatic—paws through the stuff looking for this a or that a, and all order is lost. I now have out a pile, about 2¼ inches deep, of things ranging from large postage-stamp sized single-figure sketches—to 10" or 12" X 14" or 16" sheets of Sci Fi.—Fantasy—animals—ape-men—swordsmen and other less likely stuff. And—in colour & Bl. & Wh.!

Now—unfortunately—and this always happens, too—a guy in California, and some other guy, (Midwest, I think), are currently into a similar project and with similar requests to me. Now that would be "par-for-the-course"—but they're all asking "Franklin Booth questions, on the side; and that is weird!! I find myself totally unable to recall who asked what—or just what I said—or when. (Six to ten days of "letter-lapse wipe my recall!)

I write more damn letters than Lovecraft, and you'd think I'd get "good at it"; not so. It's always like pulling teeth!

Your stuff is now laying here-to-hand along with boards cut-to-size, envelopes, etc—ready to go as soon as I can weed out some of the lesser junk, and decide what's best for your particular format.

So—! Get me on the blower—we've got to talk on this batch of stuff. My number is: 212-525-5153 and—some time after 9:30/10:00 at night, right on through to 3:30/4:00 A.M. (I'm a confirmed "night-person")

And—"this stuff is going to cost you $200.00—knocked down from 250.00, yet!' This guy Kroenkel is the worst pirate since La Fitte and to hear him scream over that fifty skins you'd think Dracula had him cornered!"

Now—when you mention my name to other publishers—thats the story; remember—embellish—go ape! Weep, show fury, denounce all artists as "greedy swine"!

Seriously—I must start to make some dough out of all this stuff, even if I did do most of it—"just-for-fun.

(Incidently—I do want $37.50 from you the extra $2.50 just may cover the bloody postage!)

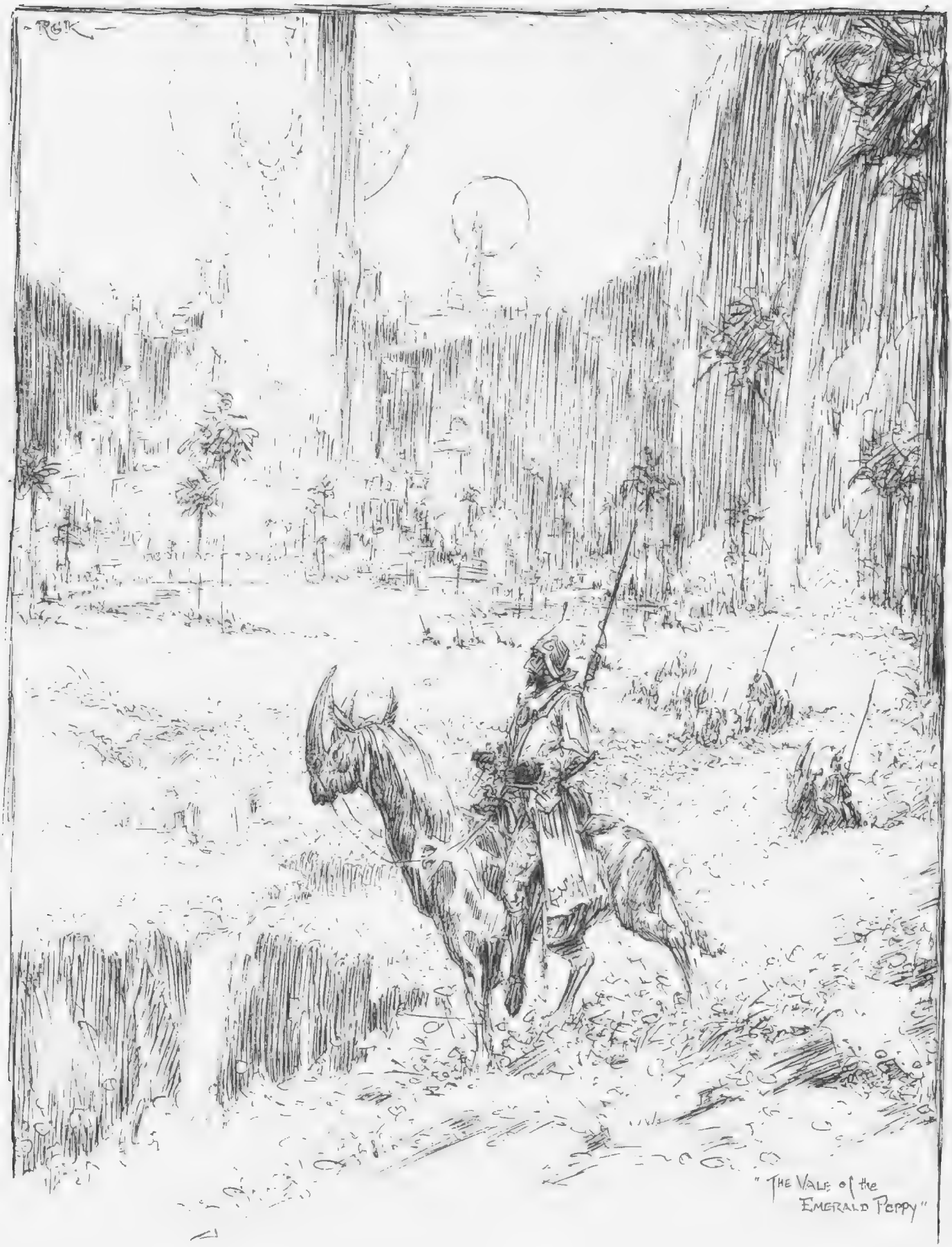
Ah!—Laurence W. Chaves—of course! And howinell did I forget ol' Chaves? Carre? Carbe?—don't know—never heard of him, which is odd! (Thought I knew 'em all')

What, (of mine), is on back of the "Alien Critic"?! I don't have this 'zine to check out. "Shining-city" subject?? Hm!

Finally: note chewed up and scuffled condition of this sheet. This is what you do not—no-NO-No—do to loaned-out doodles, Never! Care—great care!

Call me—Cheers—Roy

In the phone conversation he emphasized the necessity of returning the artwork immediately. I agreed to this, and a package arrived a week later with these notes on the art.



"THE VALE of the EMERALD POPPY"

FEB. 23, '76

THE "PIECES" — AS YOU'LL NOTE — COME IN ALL SIZES & SHAPES — SOME WITH MULTIPAL DOODLES- (UNRELATED) — SOME ON BOTH SIDES OF A SHEET. SUCH "MULTIPLE DOODLE" PAGES HAVE NOTATIONS, IN RED LETTERING, DENOTING WHICH — OF SEVERAL — DESERVE SHOOTING.

I KNOW I'D OVERLOOK SOMETHING WHEN TALKING ON A PHONE — — THE PAGE-SIZE OF YOUR UPCOMING FOLIO. (HOPEFULLY — LARGE!) REDUCTION WILL BE UNAVOIDABLE. HOWEVER DRASTIC REDUCTION OF PIECES LIKE "SAMARKAND" OR "A FANTASY of EARTH" — IN EXAMPLE CUTTING 'EM DOWN TO 4 or 5 INCHES — WOULD DO THEM NO GOOD. CONVERSELY, THE BROWN-INK "CONAN" MUST BE REDUCED; 1½ INCHES WOULD SUFFICE FOR A REPRO. OF SUCH A SIMPLE SKETCH PORTRAIT.

STUDIES MARKED WITH CRYPTIC NOTATIONS — FOR INSTANCE; "FRANZ DREGER" & "JAN. SO. SEAS" — ETC — SHOULD HAVE THESE NOTATIONS BLANKED-OFF PHOTOGRAPHICALLY. (THEY REPRESENT PERSONAL CROSS-INDEXING OF SWIPE FILES & BOOK ILLOS)

I HOPE YOU'LL BE ABLE TO COPE WITH "THOSE HAPPY DAYS TO COME", AND "THE VALE OF THE EMERALD POPPY": (THIS KIND of STUFF SENDS PRINTERS RIGHT UP THE WALL!)

"THE VALE —" IS A UNIQUE SUBJECT — BUT "THOSE HAPPY DAYS —" IS, (MORE OR LESS), STRAIGHT SC.FI: IT IS NOT BY ACCIDENT THAT I'VE INCLUDED SEVERAL SC.FI. ORIENTED "SPOTS", (THE RIFLE CARRYING SPACE-MAN READING CRYPTOGRAMS, AND THE TINY, LEVATATED "SPACE-SHIP IN FUZZY PENCIL.), SUCH SPOTS WORK OUT WELL IN PROXIMITY TO "MAIN PLATES. SIMILAR USE. (TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE WITH THIS LIMITED LOT), CAN BE MADE WITH ANIMAL AND "ANTIQUITY" PIECES

THE 2 VERSIONS OF THE "COLOSSUS AT RHODES" AND THE "ROYAL FUNERAL" WERE ROUGHS TO THOSE PIECES, FINALIZED IN PAINT, USED IN "THE 7 WONDERS of THE ANCIENT WORLD" PORTFOLIO. (IN EACH CASE THEY COME OVER BETTER IN THESE "ROUGH" LAYOUT VERSIONS!)

THE 2 COLOUR-PIECES — THE "STYRACOSAURS" AND THE "BELSHAZZAR RESULTED FROM OUR TALK — AND SUBSEQUENT SEARCHING IN MY VERY SMALL "COLOUR FILE." OF THE TWO, I TEND TO FAVOR THE DINOSAURS; — ONE OF THOSE "30-MINUTE-JOBS" DONE WHEN I WAS SWINGIN': VERY SLOPPY — VERY CASUAL — CONNOISSEUR STUFF — AND I WISH I COULD DO IT JUST-ANY-OL'-TIME!

OTHER "CONNOISSEUR STUFF" (WITH RARE FORESIGHT, STOPPED BEFORE I "KILLED 'EM") — "THE LITTLE LION" — [INBLUE WK] — THE "HOKEY BOWMAN" — [WITH COMMENT ON "TILT"] — THE FIGURE STUDY — — IN PENCIL — AND THAT CRAZY LITTLE "CAT-PICTURE", IN PENCIL — DONE ON SOME CLUTTERED SHEET, NO DOUBT — AND NOW CUT OUT TO THIS SHAPE: THESE YOU'VE GOTTA DO! (THIS IS THE SORT OF THING THAT IMPRESSES ME, AND FELLOW ARTISTS, BEYOND ANY AMOUNT OF "NOODLED-UP" MUCK!)

AGAIN — GREAT CARE WITH ALL THIS FLIMSY STUFF.

GUARD THOSE TRANSPARENCIES — 3 OF THE 5 ARE MY ONLY COPIES!

DO — SHOOT FOR A WK./10 DAYS ON THE LOAN.

DO — CONTACT ME OVER ANY QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS, ADDITIONS NOTIONS — WHATEVER.

CHEERS — Roy

When Ophemera was published in 1977, in a 68-page standard magazine format, it featured ten pages of RGK art in a section headed "Krenkel Cuts" and included several of the pieces mentioned above—"Those Happy Days to Come," "The Vale of the Emerald Poppy," "The Colossus at Rhodes" (two different full-pagers showing both front and back views of the Colossus from street level) and the "multiple doodles" (some rendered in an unusual but effective combination of ballpoint pen and marking pen). His remark, "This kind of stuff sends printers right up the wall!" is certainly apt, since many of his drawings, involving fine lines in ink or such oddities as blue pencil on tracing paper, require expert professionalism in the shooting of negatives. I have a limited supply of Ophemera with this "Krenkel Cuts" portfolio still available at $5.00 from Box 194, Somerville, Massachusetts 02143. (Individual single-copy orders only.)

As the date on the next letter reveals, two weeks passed before I returned the art.

MARCH 12TH 1976

MY DOODLES JUST CAME BACK TODAY — AND YOU ARE NOW IN A VAST GROUP OF 2 — WHO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY DEMONSTRATED THE ABILITY TO HANDLE PAPER PROPERLY. VERY NICE JOB IN THE "FUSSY-HANDLING" AREA — FOR WHICH — MANY THANKS!

RE. THAT COLOUR-TRANSPARIENCY OF THE "LAKE of GHOSTS" ROUGH: I DON'T WANT TO PACK THAT, FLOPPY MONSTER UP, AND POST IT UP TO YOU, IF POSSIBLE TO AVOID. TWENTY-SEVEN BUCKS, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS QUITE A BIT MORE REASONABLE THAN FIFTY TO SEVENTY-FIVE — COO! I TALKED TO MY FRIEND, MARTIN JACKSON,* (YOU MAY KNOW HIM — WOODY'S SON-IN-LAW), AND HE WILL BE HAPPY TO DO UP A 4"X5" (OR SOME SUCH APPROX. SIZE), FOR YOUR 27.00. THIS SIZE SHOULD BE WAY BEYOND THE REQUIREMENTS OF ANYTHING SHORT OF DOWNRIGHT FACSIMILE — — ESPECIALLY WITH A CRUDE AND SLOPPY ROUGH LIKE THE "LAKE" THIS WOULD MAKE AN "EASY BUCK" FOR MARTIN — SAVE ME A LOT OF FUSS, AND SAVE YOU A TRIP-TO-THE-CLEANERS.'

(IF, AND/OR WHEN — YOU CAN PAY MARTIN DIRECTLY.)

NOW — IF YOUR INTO NORMAN LINDSAY'S ART — I'M TAKING DOWN NAMES ON A "SUBSCRIPTION LIST" FOR A CATALOGUE FROM "THE NORMAN LINDSAY GALLERY & MUSEUM." — IN N.S.W., AUSTRALIA. THIS GORGEOUS LITTLE BOOKLET HAS THE FOLLOWING REPROS: — PEN-DRAWINGS 8 / PENCILS 2 / ETCHINGS 5 / WATER-COL. 4 / OILS 3 / SCULPTURES 23 SHIP-MODELS 11 / MISC. 16 — MANY PLATES IN FULL COLOUR!

PRICE: $3.00 (AUST.) — WHICH IS $4.00 (U.S.) — LABORIOUS ARITHMETI- DISCLOSES THAT 75¢ WILL JUST ABOUT — I HOPE! — PAY THE POSTAGE, (2 WAYS), M.O. FEES, POSTAGE ON NUMEROUS "ANNOUNCEMENTS", PHONE CALLS, PACKAGING TO "SUBSCRIBERS", ETC. ETC.

IF YOU ARE A NORMAN LINDSAY NUT — OR IF YOU WANT TO BECOME ONE — SHOOT ME OUT A QUICK CHECK for $4.75 — (THAT'S U.S., OF COURSE) — AND YOU'LL BE ON-THE-LIST. I'M SHOOTING TO COVER ALL OF THE 12 OR 14 GUYS LISTED, (MOSTLY "BIG-TIME" COLLECTORS), IN A 10 DAY / 2 WK. DEADLINE. ONCE THE MONEY'S OFF THERE'LL BE A 2½ to 3 MONTH WAIT TO GET THE STUFF BY SLOW-BOAT FROM "DOWN UNDER". (WHICH IS ONE REASON FOR THE PRE-PAID SYSTEM USED HERE — I SIMPLY CAN'T TIE UP ANOTHER 55-60 BUCKS FOR 3 MONTHS.)

LET ME KNOW —

CHEERS — Roy

* MARTIN WORKS IN A PHOTO STUDIO, BY THE WAY — (A "PRO"!)

Note that his "subscription list" on the Lindsay book was in no way planned to make a profit, but instead was RGK's way of making collectors and friends happy while he just barely covered his costs. The slim softbound book turned out to be a gem, filled with color plates and biographical information. Published in 1975 by the National Trust of Australia, (9 Observatory Hill, Sydney 2000), the full title is Norman Lindsay Gallery & Museum--A Guide to the Collection at Springwood. Leafing through this booklet, the strong influence of Lindsay's work on RGK is immediately apparent.

When Cities & Scenes from the Ancient World was published by Owlswick Press (Box 8243, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19101) in 1974, it revealed RGK as a writer, since his introductory "Some Comments on 'Doodling'—and Other Irreverent Observations" succeeded in communicating exactly what was in his head while drawing. It's an unusual article, the kind of writing artists rarely attempt. I must have commented in this vein, as indicated by the second paragraph in the last letter. Apparently, I had also hit on the idea of accompanying the Ophemera with a checklist of his paperbacks but did not know he totally ignored such business records. A checklist of RGK books did appear in The Howard Review #4, later reprinted in a booklet titled The Illustrators of R.E.H.—Roy G. Krenkel (1975) by Dennis McHane, and an article by Bill Spicer on RGK's paperback art can be found in Russ Cochran's reprint volume of EC's Incredible Science Fiction. The last letter also provides a brief glimpse of RGK's vast collection. The Woody is Woody Gelman.

March 17, 1976

Got your check--first one to arrive on the subscription list, by the way.

A real "shot-in-the-arm" to hear you dug my commentary in Cities & Scenes, (replete with "typos"--as usual: for to, read too--for "Gooney Bird," read just, plain Gooney--etc., etc.) Nevertheless it is fun to write--although I'd hate to do it as a full-time business!

The original, hardbound version of "The Sowers" is long out-of-print. (Went bust around 8-10 months after publication.) I doubt Doubleday can help.

One thing you're wrong on: that "5 minutes" checking out titles and covers. 5 days--? maybe--5 wks--possibly! You just don't know this house! Year or two ago, (this still sticks in my mind), I wanted to locate one of my old "Ace" volumes. Forget the title, but it was the one of the "Hero-swinging-on-a-rope." All my Ace things--and 3-4 others--are in one cabinet--safe and sound—impossible to mislay. (NICE THEORY!) So, I looked there--nix! I looked again--real careful--no! I looked elsewhere--and elsewhere-elsewhere--zero! To this day I've not found the bloody thing! I did— finally--find a proof...in my Frazetta file! Why??--(You may well ask!) More recently—really annoying—I've tried, and am still trying off and on--to find the 3 Jack Vance novels on his proposed 5-title set The Killing Machine. These also were kept in-a-lump--to "prevent getting mislaid." Nowhere--gone--vanished--poof! I never loan this stuff--it never leaves the house--it's too big to get lost in stacks of letters or pages. Where does it go? I wish I knew.

I'd guess--discounting prints and clippings--I've got around 35 to 40 thousand magazines, paperbacks, books, folios, journals, fanzines, comics, etc., etc.--scattered through cabinets, shelves, wardrobes, boxes and floor--strewn in some 6 rooms—plus a cellar. At any given time I can, (usually), locate about 97% of this muck--but 3% of 35/40 thou. leaves a lot of loose ends! (Just scrap that list idea!)

Woody did have a stroke. They got to him real quick--and he seems to be recuperating. Dammit, I hope so! He's home for the last 2--(3?)--wks., and appears to be fooling around with the "collection business" and--via phone--the publishing end of things again. I just hope it all works out!

Cheers,
Roy

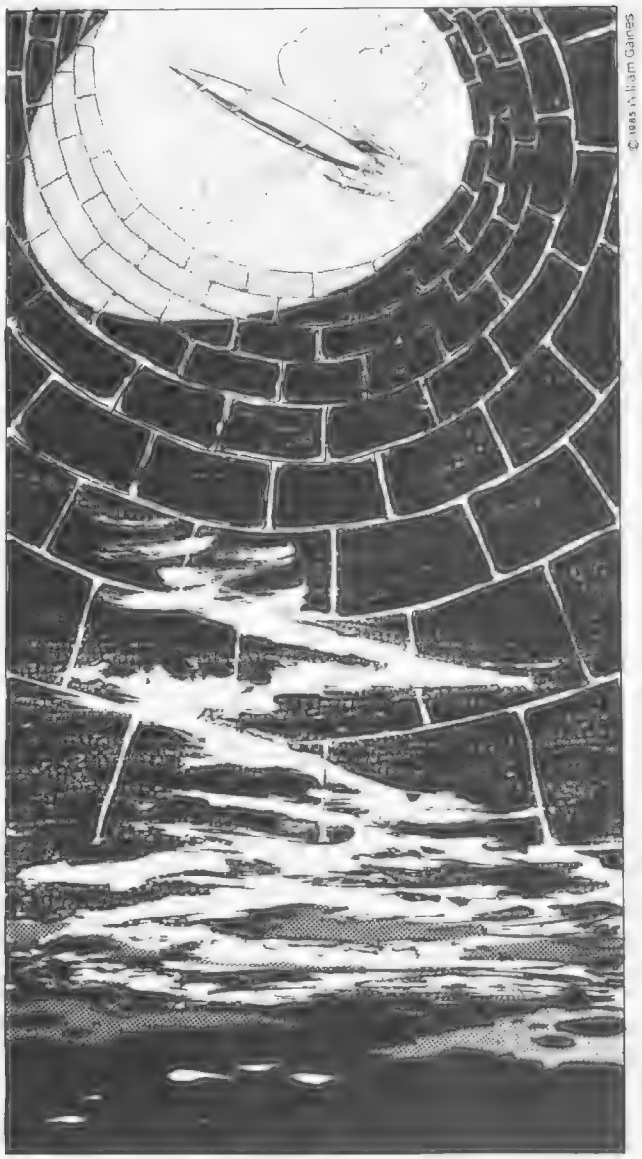
RGK died 24 February 1983. In the summer of 1983 his last interview appeared in Comics Interview #4. It opens with interviewer Rick Bryant asking, "Why are you smiling?"

And the dying RGK simply responded,

"Why not?"

—Bhob

Tarzan © ERB



Ray Bradbury

By George Snowden

THE BEST OF TWO WORLDS

EC

Ray Bradbury's name stirs up a "dark carnival" of memories — memories of first reading The Martian Chronicles many years ago, and the hundreds of his stories I have read since--in books, pulps, limited-edition thin volumes acquired at some expense, and of course, EC comics. Put these two potent ingredients together: Ray Bradbury's writings and EC's adaptations, and one has the perfect blending of the best of two worlds from the most creative author and the most innovative comic publisher of the Fifties.

I follow Ray Bradbury's trail through bookstores and magazines; I watch for every new piece of his writing, and writings about his writings. Several years ago I wrote to him, asking about the rumors of his first mystery novel; his brief answer mentioned this book as forthcoming someday. Whenever it is finally completed, there's a space already reserved on my Bradbury bookshelf (already bulging with his books). Bradbury lives on, diversified into many areas. EC comics are today also very much alive, available at a reasonable cost in hardcover bindings, larger than before, in sharp black and white shot from the original artwork. These are outstanding reproductions; the lack of color in many cases allows one to concentrate even more on the art and story. In their new, large size, these stories are clearly visible and long remembered. Russ Cochran has retained the services of Marie Severin. EC's original comic colorist, to do the covers--bolder, better and brighter than before, The color covers make each volume published very special. Is it possible now to think of anyone but Wallace Wood illustrating "There Will Come Soft Rains" (Weird Fantasy #17) or anyone other than Jack Davis drawing the nightmare of "The Black Ferris" (Haunt of Fear #18)?

In the matter of covers, artist/writer/editor Al Feldstein did a beautiful job on "I, Rocket." To read this story in its original text I obtained Amazing Stories (May,1944) through an ad in The Buyer's Guide to Comic Fandom. It was expensive, but worth the price to add to my collection and to compare Brady's original illustration to the magnificent ones by Al

Williamson. The Brady illustration can be seen in Crawford's Encyclopedia of Comic Books following a rather poor reproduction of both the WF cover and story.

One of my favorite EC adaptations is John Severin and Bill Elder's "The Million Year Picnic" (WF, #21). Another is Wood's "Mars is Heaven" (originally titled "The Third Expedition" in The Martian Chronicles) which appeared in Weird Science #18. Although some of the artists were not familiar with the original texts, they nevertheless managed to capture and create the spirit of Bradbury's prose.

Visual impressions remain long after the pages are turned. "The October Game" (Jack Kamen, Shock SuspenStories #9) moves toward a grisly but unforeseen climax. The fear mounts, you feel it with the participants around the table. I always thought this to be one of EC's best horror stories. Take a dip into "The Lake" (Vault of Horror #31) which wisely didn't have the Vault Keeper comment or appear in the story. The melting, candle-wax faces in the last panel of Wood's "Mars is Heaven" reveal just enough humanness and the right amount of alienness, with the tentacled Martian-monster arm on one side and the exploding rocket, representing Earth, on the other. The impressions left by EC stick in my mind whenever I reread The Martian Chronicles, an annual event, meaning at least 30 readings since I first discovered it.

Other single impressions come to mind: the shadows of the family and the ball that will never come down in the opening panel of "There Will Come

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April 19, 1952

The Editor
WEIRD-FANTASY
E.C.Publishing Co. Inc.
285 Lafayette
New York 12, New York

Dear Sir:

Just a note to remind you of an oversight. You have not as yet sent on the check for $50.00 to cover the use of secondary rights on my two stories THE ROCKET MAN and KALEIDOSCOPE which appeared in your WEIRD-FANTASY May-June '52.#13, with the cover-all title of HOME TO STAY. I feel this was probably overlooked in the general confusion of office-work, and look forward to your payment in the near future. My very best wishes to you.

Yours cordially,

Ray Bradbury

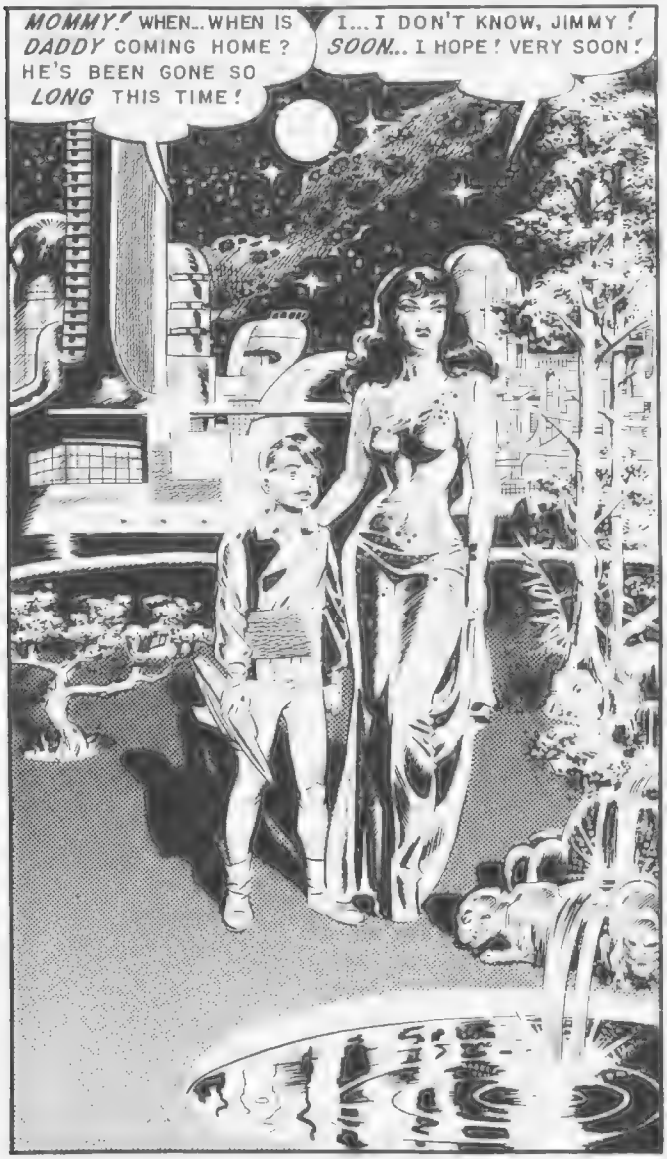
Ray Bradbury
10750 Clarkson Rd.
Los Angeles 64, Calif.

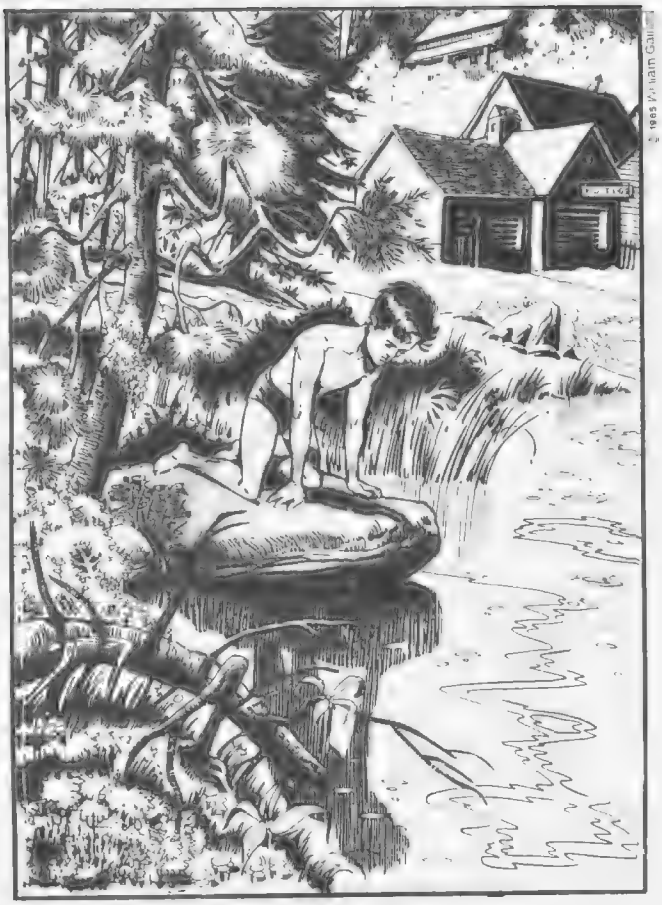
P.S. Have you ever considered doing an entire issue of your magazine based on my stories in DARK CARNIVAL, or my other two books THE ILLUSTRATED MAN and THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES? I'd be very interested in discussing this with you for some future issue. I think we could do an outstanding job here. May I hear from you? If you wish, I could send copies of my books on for perusal. R.B.

Soft Rains," the robot/woman looking at the sky in the final panel of Orlando's impressive "The Long Years," the face (and good heart) of Fiorello Bodini in "Outcast of the Stars." Here you know the man, his family and his dreams. The basic plotlines of "The Emissary" and "Skeleton" were transformed into EC stories (under different titles) and without acknowlegement to Bradbury. Bradbury's final paragraphs are often similiar to EC endings: either they punch you in the face and knock you flat or they slip into your system like a cold knife in the ribs. You may wish to peek at the ending of a Bradbury story or an EC tale but the effect is hardly lessened or spoiled by doing so, for the middle of the tale is just as powerful.

At the 1982 Dimension Convention in New York, I asked why EC dropped their Bradbury front cover announcements, and I learned that this was at his personal request. They were an extra enticement for me, but the letters pages showed a diversity of opinions on the subject. Many readers did not appreciate or understand what was being done, and I am most grateful that Gaines continued to publish Bradbury, announcement on the outside or not!

What if EC had not had to bow under the





economic pressure generated by the Code and change from New Trend to the less controversial, less popular New Direction? What could they have done with other Bradbury stories? Such as..."The Playground" (Ingels), "The Scythe" (Krigstein), "The Next in Line" (Davis), "All Summer in a Day" (Wood), "The Veldt" (Orlando), "Jack-in-the-Box" (Wood), "The Fox and the Forest" (Davis), "The Fog Horn" (Severin & Elder), "The Pedestrian" (Orlando), "The Dwarf" (Davis), and "Fever Dream" (Ingels). If one reads these stories while forming impressions of these artists' styles, it is more than a game; it is a pleasure.

Bradbury first contacted EC after the unauthorised use of his "The Rocket Man" and "Kaleidoscope" in the powerful, Wood-illustated "Home to Stay" (WF #13). EC adapted 24 Bradbury stories directly, 26 if you count "Home to Stay" and even more if you add in tales borrowed from this master magician. They came from familiar books and obscure pulps. They found their way mainly into the science fiction comics, but there were still two each in Tales from the Crypt, Vault of Horror, Crime Suspenstories, Haunt of Fear, and Shock Suspenstories.

I know of no more inspired writer in this century who has taken us beyond our time (and before it as well) with such force and enjoyment than Ray Bradbury. It is obvious that he loves what he is best at, and that in their days of glory, EC echoed the same feeling.

Over the years I have slowly built up an extensive Bradbury collection, which includes a rare copy of Dark Carnival, one of 3112 copies published in 1947 by Arkham House. I bought mine (luckily) in 1950 after a trip to the EC offices, the first of many meetings with Bill Gaines. EC

had already put out a number of their Bradbury horror adaptations by the time I dropped in to see if I could still obtain a copy of Shock SuspenStories #1 (as there were none to be had at the newsstands). I did and also learned about Dark Carnival. Many of the stories in Dark Carnival later appeared in other collected works, often revised by Bradbury. Dark Carnival may still be obtained from dealers—if you have $450.

There are recordings on cassettes and records as well: The entire Martian Chronicles (with recorded comments by Ray Bradbury before he reads the tales) can be obtained from Listening Library (Old Greenwich, Connecticut), as are selected passages from Fahrenheit 451. "The Small Assassin" is available on Caedemon. After four years of searching to obtain the rare Dark Carnival "Songs for a Sideshow of the Mind" record, two came to my attention within a month of each other, one from the West Coast, one from the East. I bought one for $50 and the other was sold to a friend (and

LOOK, MOMMY! LOOK! A FALLING STAR!
QUICKLY, JIMMY DEAR! MAKE A WISH... MAKE A WISH!
I WISH... I WISH MY DADDY WOULD COME HOME TONIGHT... HOME TO STAY!
THE END

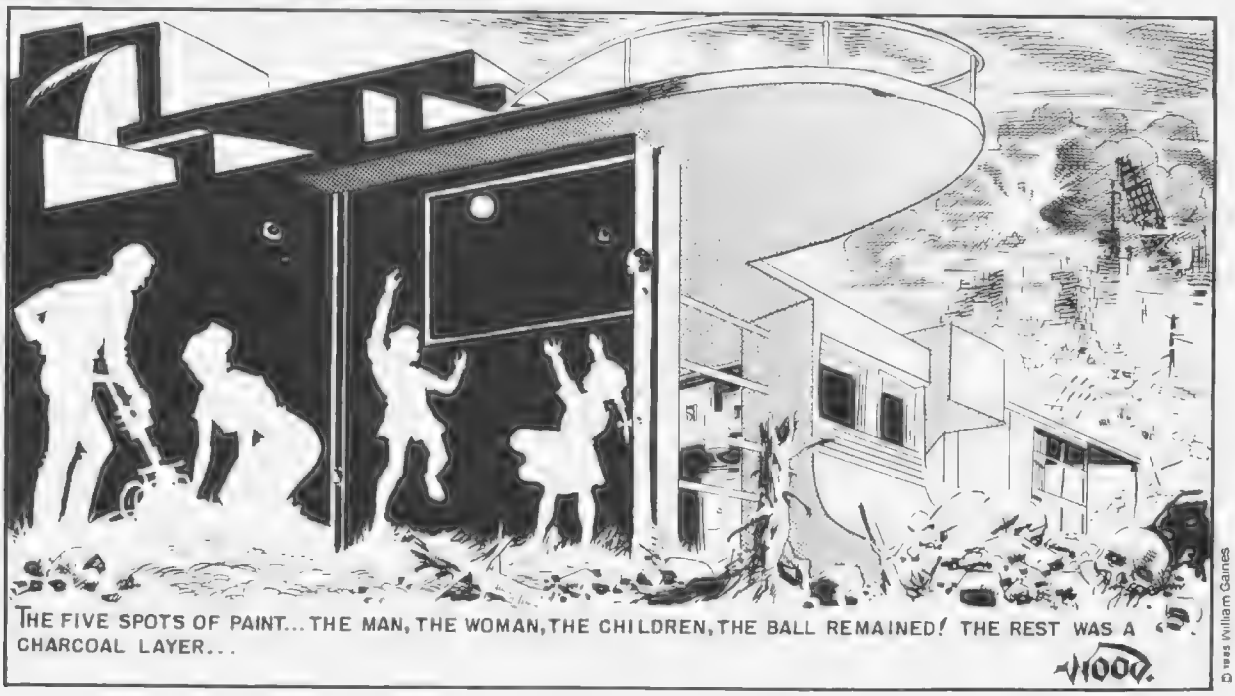
DAD POINTED STRAIGHT DOWN. THE MARTIANS WERE THERE, ALL RIGHT. IT SENT A THRILL CHASING THROUGH TIMOTHY...
THE MARTIANS WERE THERE... IN THE CANAL... REFLECTED IN THE WATER. TIMOTHY AND MICHAEL AND ROBERT AND MOM AND DAD. THE MARTIANS STARED BACK AT THEM FOR A LONG, LONG SILENT TIME FROM THE RIPPLING WATER...

fellow Bradbury collector) in Ohio for $15. With mine, I received a pamphlet with lyrics to the songs.

The Ray Bradbury stories adapted by EC are special and moving. One hundred of Bradbury's best are collected in the 1980 The Stories of Ray Bradbury (Knopf). Bradbury's prose style of near-poetry is a wonderful landscape of visual impressions. Whenever I read The Martian Chronicles I am walking on the rocky red surface of Mars. I have been to Ireland and Mexico only through Bradbury's words. I have stepped on the surface of Venus, run through the rain, romped with the children in their hour of sun, shared hot chocolate in the sun-dome, suffocated in the closeness of the entombed horrors of Guanajuano and have been brought back to life, wearing sneakers and running as a boy in the magic of Green Town.

Ray Bradbury works a kind of magic: he takes the world, or a world that might be, and skews reality off to the side of fantasy, but not so far away that you forget where you are—just enough to think, wonder, or recoil in horror as one does when a dog drops rank, crawling earth smelling of a cemetery, onto your bed or when you almost step on a jellyfish that calls you by name...

Here is a marvelous teller of tales. May he live forever and create out a thousand more.


THE FIVE SPOTS OF PAINT... THE MAN, THE WOMAN, THE CHILDREN, THE BALL REMAINED! THE REST WAS A CHARCOAL LAYER...
WOOD
© 1955 William Gaines

JERRY DE FUCCIO

The School of Communication Arts at Fordham

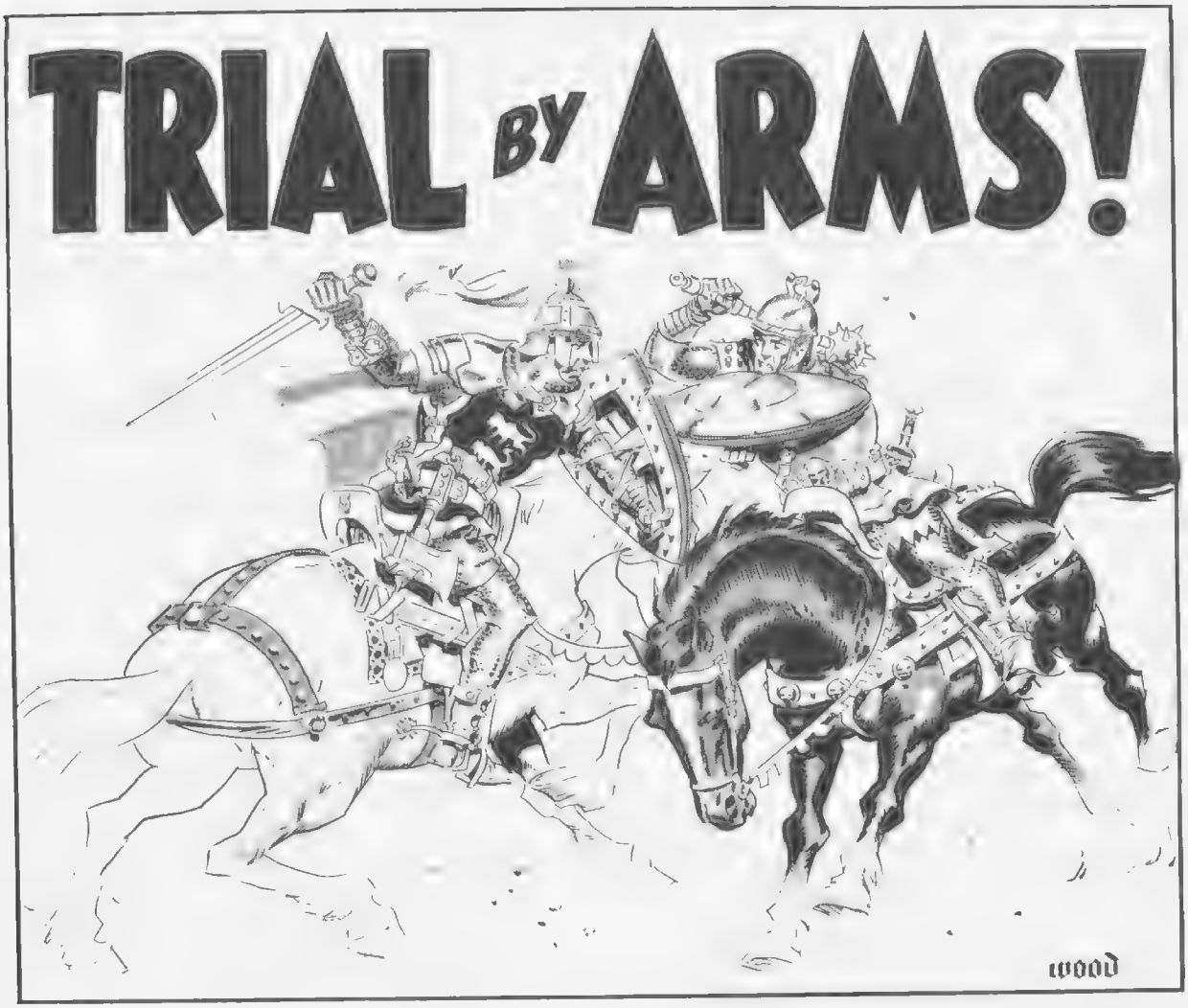
Jerry De Fuccio: When I was in a Jesuit prep school, we use to like have a holy day off and I would go over to Lexington Avenue and visit some of the comic book houses. They were very nice to me. They would let me watch them work, and I guess my favorite was Reed Crandall, who did such phenomenal work on Blackhawk. I met Crandall during prep school. Then I was to meet him later at Mad. I also met Jack Cole who did Plastic Man. He was very patient. He was another big favorite of mine. I guess Crandall and Jack Cole were the two biggies of my prep school days. There was an artist, Mart Bailey, at Columbia comics, who did a character for Big Shot Comics called "The Face." He wore a very horrible mask. I was sort of fascinated by comic book artists. When I was in pre-med at St. Peter's College I was following the work of Alex Toth. He was doing Green Lantern at the time. I called him up, and I said, "Gee Mr. Toth, I would like to meet you because..." Same old line kids give constantly. I found his home phone number in the New York phone book. I had the idea that he was 10 or 20 years older than myself. When I got over there to his house he was very cordial, and I found out he was four or five years younger than me![laughts] He had just come out of art school. He was like the wonder kid of that time—I think 1948. Through Alex Toth I met Joe Kubert, and they were really two of my buddies in the early days. They really influenced me to get into comics, because I socialized with them a lot.

Qua Brot: Were you interested in doing art?

De Fuccio: No, I couldn't draw, but the writing part interested me. I used to write a lot of shows in school. In grammar school I used to have my own radio program that we would put on every week in assembly. We had about eight or nine characters, along with me. It went over big in the school, so they let us do it every week. When I got to college I did a lot of shows. Actually, I had more fun while I was an amateur. Something went out of it when I became a professional. [laughs]

QB: When you sent your Penrod adaptations to Harvey Kurtzman, that was a written script?

De Fuccio: Yes. First I sent them to Dell, and they said the problem was that the author, Booth Tarkington, still had a copyright. The stories were not in public domain; they were still copyrighted. They wouldn't permit them to be used



in comic books. So then I sent them to Harvey, just to give him some indication of how I could do adaptations, because I had no other samples to show. he was really impressed with them, and he called me up. That is how I started doing the fillers.

QB: Had you met Kurtzman before then?

De Fuccio: No. I thought his real name was Kurtz. He use to draw a little man after his name. I thought his real name was Kurtz, and then there was a little stick man. I then found out that his real name was Kurtzman. That was his cute way of signing his work.

QB: When was that?

De Fuccio: That was around 1949.

QB: Did you do any work for him before EC?

De Fuccio: No. I sent the Penrods to him when he was at EC. I only knew his work for EC. I never knew him before that.

QB: You hadn't seen any of his work before EC?

De Fuccio: No, I know he did some filler pages in some of the Timely Comics, but I never connected his work there with his work in EC because he did full length stories. He didn't do just one-pagers.

QB: What did you do for him at EC?

De Fuccio: I was writing the fillers from home; I did not go into the office. I was only going into his studio downtown mostly just to go to lunch with the guys. I would get an idea for a filler, and I would call him up at his home in Mt. Vernon. I was getting paid $12.50 for a filler, but Harvey was such a busy man who had so many distractions that by the time I got my go ahead, on the telephone, the telephone bill had already been $15. [laughs] So my father, being a doctor, was skeptical. He said, "Is this how you make big bucks in writing?" Harvey would always say, "I'll be right with you Jerome. I think that's the cleaning man, the man from the dry cleaners." [laughs] We were always getting interrupted. Finally, he wanted someone to do research for him, because it was taking him two-and-a-half weeks to write one story whereas Al Feldstein was writing one a day. He would go in a room, and at the end of the afternoon he'd come out with a finished story. He would talk it over with Bill Gaines in the morning. They would plot it together, and then Al would go in and write the whole thing. Harvey was doing so much research on authenticity that sometimes it would take him as much as two to two-

EN CRAPAUDINE!
PAUVRE DIABLE! POOR DEVIL OF A DESERTER!
OUI! EN CRAPAUDINE IS THE PRICE FOR 'GOING ON THE PUMP'!
J.P. SEVERIN
© 1985 William Gaines

and-a-half weeks to do one war story.

QB: As time went on, you had more script input?

De Fuccio: Yeah, because we socialized a lot. We went to this Italian restaurant in the neighborhood for lunch--John Severin, Billy Elder, Wally Wood, myself and Harvey--and we would discuss different battles and different wars. Harvey was very good; he would ask the guys specifically, "What kind of story would you like to do?" John would say, "I think I would like to do Lewis Cavalry. I'd like to do Civil War." Jack Davis had been in the Navy, and he wanted to do a story about destroyers, battleships, things like that. Harvey would try very hard to please the artists. He would write stories specifically for them because he wanted them to get excited about a story.

QB: Did you write fillers for all of the EC comics?

De Fuccio: Not for all of them, but I wrote ones for the war books.

QB: Did you write most of them for the war books?

De Fuccio: Yeah, I think that I wrote most of them for the war books.

QB: Any favorites?

De Fuccio: I started introducing a character, an Irish sergeant in the British army in India of Afghanistan called Sergeant Turbridy. Then I proceeded to do him not only in fillers but full-length. I did him in the Two Fisted story "Outpost," and I did him in a story in the last issue of Frontline Combat called "Belts and Celts." I even did him later on for one of the DC war comics in a story called "Parable."

QB: Did you have any favorite artists at EC?

De Fuccio: Gee, it would be hard to say. I palled around with John Severin so much, and I admired him in particular, because when he drew a uniform it really looked like the person was wearing a uniform. He was very very correct in all the buttons and every part of the uniform, he was very precise. Then we became very good friends, and I started writing some Indian stories for him when he was doing an Indian called American Eagle for Crestwood. I wrote a few of those Indian stories for another company. We got to be very good friends. Eventually, he married my cousin, Micky De Fuccio. They have six kids now and live out in Denver, Colorado.

Of course Marie Severin was there. She was very pleasant to work with. She was the best

colorist I guess I ever saw in comics. Today she is doing artwork, I guess she is still doing coloring, but she would be wasted if she just concentrated on coloring because she is such a fine artist.

QB: Are you in contact with many of the EC people now?

De Fuccio: No. I think Johnny Craig lives in Pennsylvania, so I have not spoken to him in over a year. I used to see Harvey on the street now and then. Now I don't see much of him. No, I don't see much of any of them now. I think the greatest fun was when Bill Elder was doing the inking for John Severin in the war books, and finally Willy got his chance to do the whole story by himself when he started to do Mad comics because he was really a zany in Mad comics. The funniest thing I remember about the old EC days was when Bill Elder would bring in a finished Mad story. He had been living with the story for at least two-and-a-half weeks, putting in a lot of things in the background, putting in a lot of little gags. He would bring it into the office and hand it to Bill Gaines. Bill Gaines would do sort of a proofreading of it, as he read it out loud. Willy Elder would stand behind Gaines' chair. He would act as if he had never seen the story before, and he would say, "Oh, wait until you see the next panel. It is a killer! It is a killer!" [laughs] We use to crack up, because Willy got more excited about the story he had just delivered than we did. It was very funny. He is a very likeable guy, Willy Elder. I think all the guys at EC were quite different, very talented, very friendly. Severin was a master of the military idiom. Willy Elder was the most hilarious, whackiest artist that ever drew for Mad. In fact he would be about the only guy who could draw Plastic Man today the way Jack Cole created Plastic Man originally because Willy has that same kind of a mind that twists and convulses. Johnny Craig was remarkable to watch because he was a perfectionist. Wally Wood was so good in so many areas--science fiction, suspense, crime, and even in Mad. He worked very hard. I sat at his elbow a couple of weekends, just sat there, and we drank coffee all weekend, and I used to watch him work. Wally Wood never watched the clock. He was so intent on what he was putting into the panels. He gave them more artwork for the dollar than anybody.

QB: Did you know many of the artists who just worked on the science fiction books?

De Fuccio: Joe Orlando is a very hard worker. He did some very fine work in science fiction. I guess Wally Wood was the biggest science fiction man.

QB: When EC changed to New Direction, were you just working on Mad.

De Fuccio: No, that is when I left. I went to Fordham at that time, when they killed off the horror line and tried to go with the New Direction. They say that the typical sophisticated EC readers thought that the New Directions were sort of tame, mild after the previous books that had been sort of outlawed.

QB: You came back to Mad after you went to school?

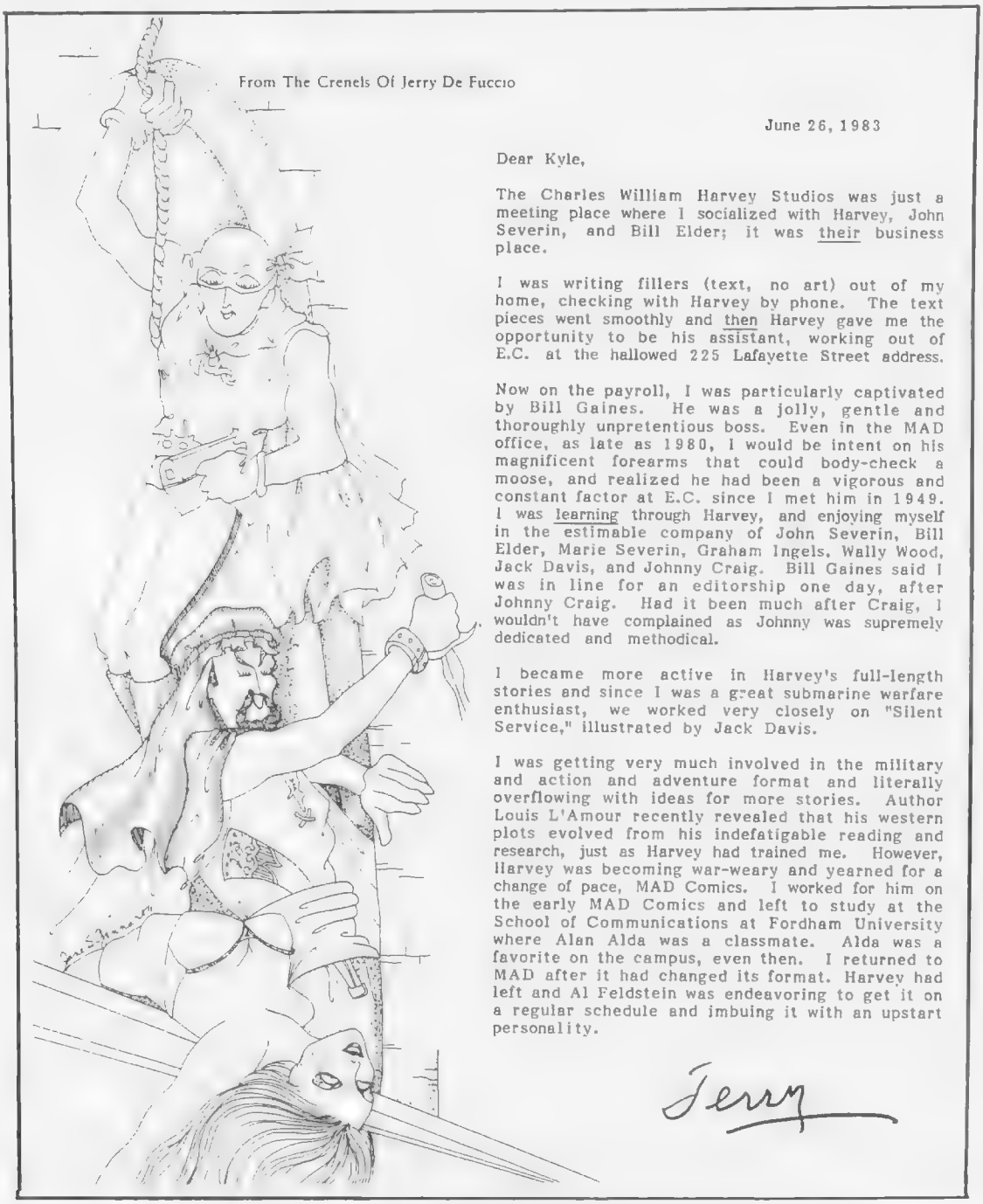
De Fuccio: Yes, I came back after Harvey had left. The only ones there were Al Feldstein and John Putman, the art director, and Bill.

QB: So it was quite a different atmosphere.

De Fuccio: Well, it was like there was nothing going on. Harvey had gone over to Hugh Hefner and was doing a magazine for him called Trump. So Al Feldstein was trying to pick up the pieces, as it were.

QB: So you were writing scripts at this time?

De Fuccio: We did not have many writers because we were relatively new, and Al Feldstein and I would sit and write articles together. A month or so after I got there Al hired Nick Meglin who had just come out of art school, and he became like another contributing editor. He was good at thinking up ideas. Then there were like three of us doing articles. Then gradually we started to have writers come in like Frank Jacobs, who was one of the first.


From The Crenels Of Jerry De Fuccio
June 26, 1983
Dear Kyle,
The Charles William Harvey Studios was just a meeting place where I socialized with Harvey, John Severin, and Bill Elder; it was their business place.
I was writing fillers (text, no art) out of my home, checking with Harvey by phone. The text pieces went smoothly and then Harvey gave me the opportunity to be his assistant, working out of E.C. at the hallowed 225 Lafayette Street address.
Now on the payroll, I was particularly captivated by Bill Gaines. He was a jolly, gentle and thoroughly unpretentious boss. Even in the MAD office, as late as 1980, I would be intent on his magnificent forearms that could body-check a moose, and realized he had been a vigorous and constant factor at E.C. since I met him in 1949. I was learning through Harvey, and enjoying myself in the estimable company of John Severin, Bill Elder, Marie Severin, Graham Ingels, Wally Wood, Jack Davis, and Johnny Craig. Bill Gaines said I was in line for an editorship one day, after Johnny Craig. Had it been much after Craig, I wouldn't have complained as Johnny was supremely dedicated and methodical.
I became more active in Harvey's full-length stories and since I was a great submarine warfare enthusiast, we worked very closely on "Silent Service," illustrated by Jack Davis.
I was getting very much involved in the military and action and adventure format and literally overflowing with ideas for more stories. Author Louis L'Amour recently revealed that his western plots evolved from his indefatigable reading and research, just as Harvey had trained me. However, Harvey was becoming war-weary and yearned for a change of pace, MAD Comics. I worked for him on the early MAD Comics and left to study at the School of Communications at Fordham University where Alan Alda was a classmate. Alda was a favorite on the campus, even then. I returned to MAD after it had changed its format. Harvey had left and Al Feldstein was endeavoring to get it on a regular schedule and imbuing it with an upstart personality.
Jerry

QB: Had Nick Meglin been around during the New Trend books?

De Fuccio: I think he had helped, while he was in school. He had done some work for Feldstein's Panic, a funny comic book that deliberately was not as good as Mad, because Al did not put that much time into it. He wrote it very quickly, and it was sort of a different kind of humor. It was more slapstick, I think.

QB: Do you have any favorite EC stories.

De Fuccio: Well they were all in the war books. I was very partial to our war books over the horror and everything else. I thought the war books were very constructive. There was that submarine story, called "Silent Service" there was another story called "Wolf." Harvey did the layouts. Whether I wrote the story or not, Harvey had a great deal to do with it. He helped me with the layouts. "Pearl Divers," I like, and there was another one about knights called "Trial by Arms." And I did one about the French Foreign Legion called "En Crapaudine!" in Two-Fisted Tales #34. They were my favorites.

Most of this is really behind me now. Regretfully, I find that they really don't let you write the way you want to in the comics these days. I tried to put out my own magazine once with Reed Crandall, Alex Toth and John Severin, but the man who was backing me pulled out on the money even though I had a lot of stories done. I had paid for the art myself, and I had written the stories so I was rather disappointed. I sold some of them to Joe Kubert for his DC war books. There was one I had done on the Flying Tigers with John Severin. Then I did another one about post-Civil War with John Severin. I did the French Foreign Legion with Reed Crandall. I did another one about Afghanistan with John Severin.

I think the artwork is pretty good in comics. There are a lot of good artists around, but I think comics could be so much better if the writing was better.

July 1, 1983

Dear Kyle,

The exhilaration upon being invited to join "the war books" by Bill Gaines and Harvey Kurtzman was soon enhanced by the perception that they (Feldstein included) were so receptive to original thought and innovation. It was as distinctive as being with the only comic book outfit in the field.

I was including all my former schoolmates' names in my war fillers and they didn't seem to mind being killed in a rear guard action, holding a bridge or some other valiant act. I had a gal friend who was an accomplished horsewoman; I named a bomber after her, Palomino Jane, and she showed that issue all around the stables.

I became a self-appointed Circulation Booster for all the E.C. line, going from town to town, city line to city line in New Jersey, squaring off the issues in candy stores and drugstores along the way, bringing them down front for their deserved prominence, out of the bleachers, into the box seats.

The people who ran the Mom and Pop stores began to accept me as a representative of Hudson News Distributors, or some such official checker. They'd even assure me that the E.C. line sold just as quickly as they could snip the cord on the bundle of various publications delivered, glorious tidings as I believe there were some six hundred comic book titles registered at the time.

One evening I, in a tuxedo, stopped in at one of the familiar paper stores prior to attending a formal dinner party. I picked up a roll of Life Savers and instinctively went over to the racks to check on my bread and butter.

The kindly little Jewish proprietor restrained me, quickly announcing, "I straightened them out for you already!"

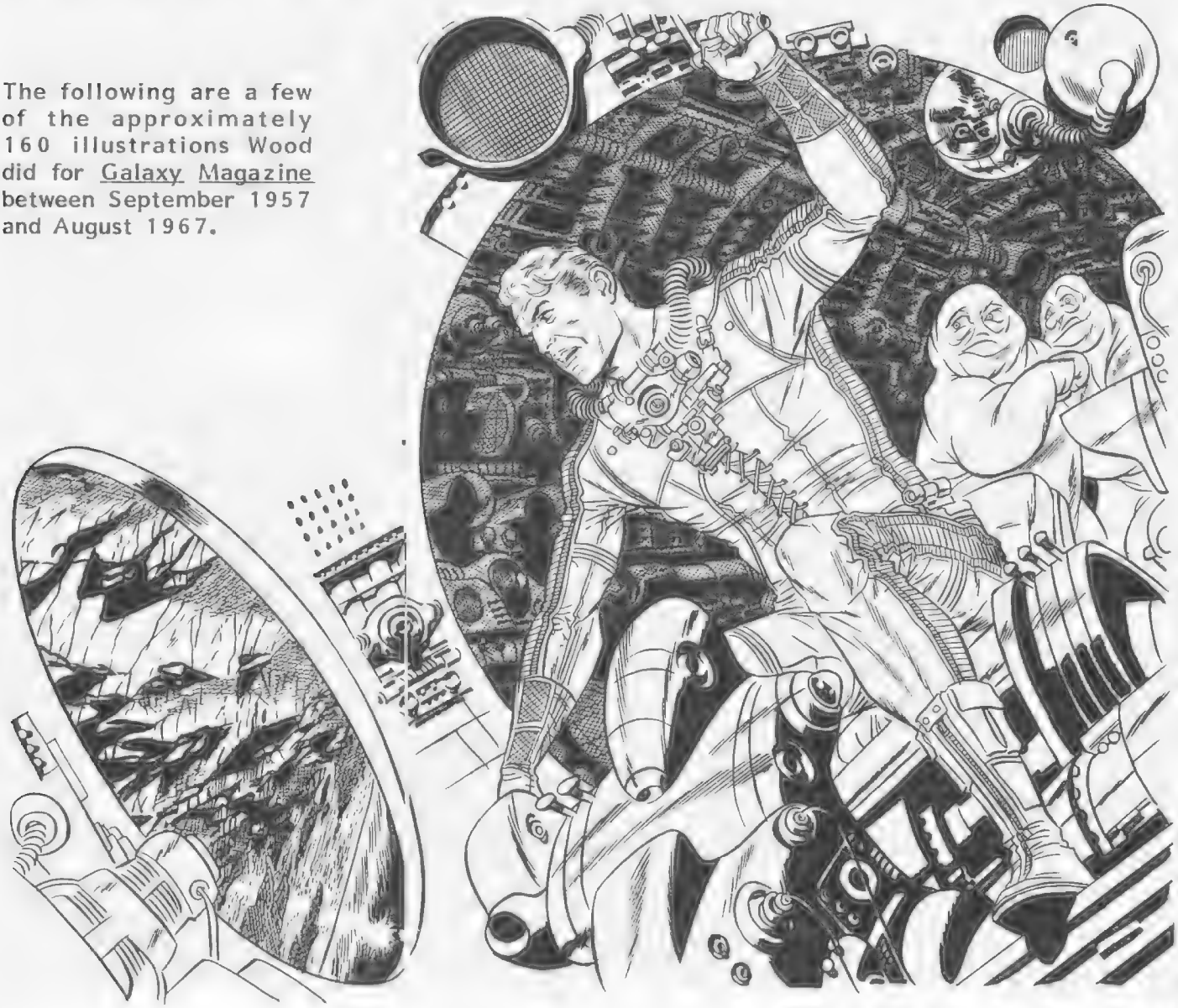
As I left, he turned to his always silent, folded-arms wife and opined, "In that suit, he must own the company."

Terry

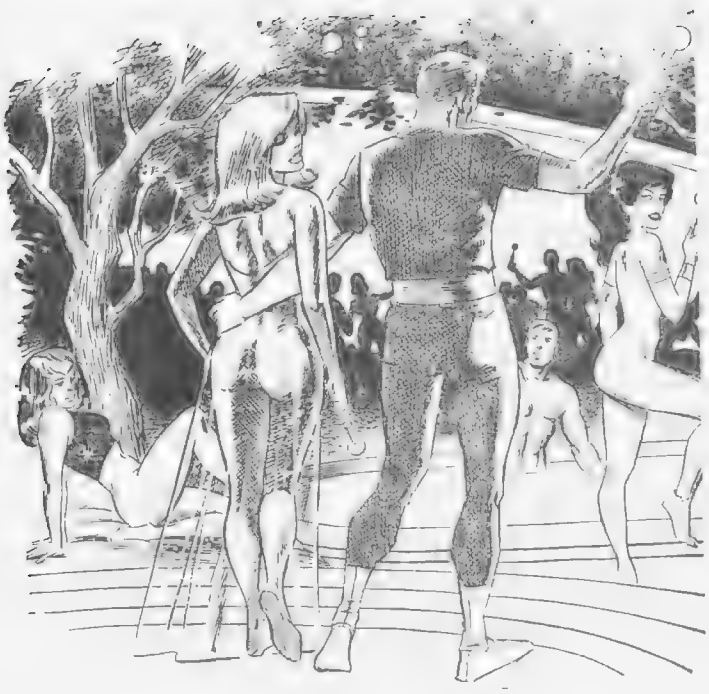
wood.

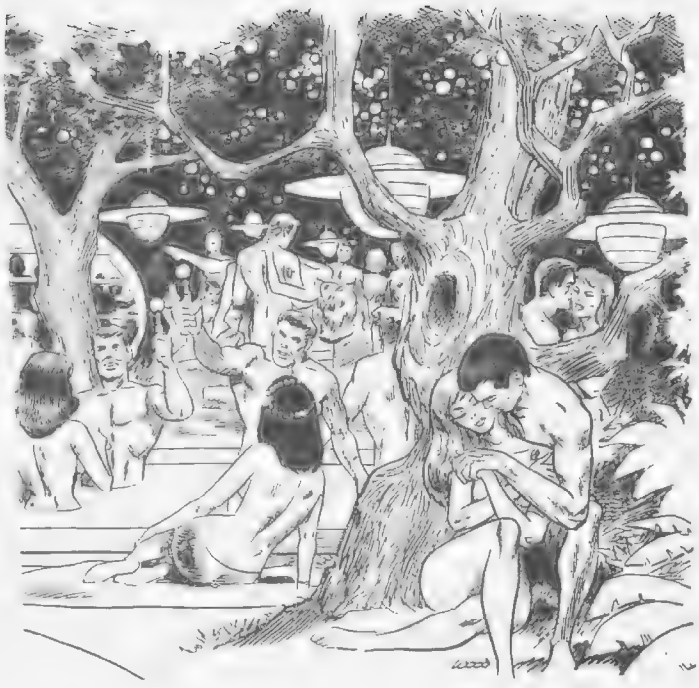
GALAXY FOLIO

The following are a few of the approximately 160 illustrations Wood did for Galaxy Magazine between September 1957 and August 1967.



The Waging of
The Peace





BASICALLY BASIL

By Dick Voll

When Basil Wolverton died in 1978, the art world lost one of its most inventive and imaginative--and perhaps its all-time wildest--cartoonists. Wolverton once commented, "A lot of people look down their snoots at cartooning as the lowest form of art--if a form of art at all--and I certainly haven't done anything to dispel that notion."

He had his critics, those who would get upset or disgusted over the products of his unrestrained imagination, feeling that illustrations so grotesque or ridiculous would be better left undone. But, of course, his fans outnumbered them and had an appreciation for his totally unique creations.

His work was a magnificent paradox, a kind of mockery of art while still remaining legitimate art at the same time. His meticulous rendering technique added to the hypnotic fascination Wolvertoons tended to arouse.

I met Wolverton in late 1958. His work in the early Fifties for the 10-cent Mad comics had pleased me greatly, so when I learned that the artist himself lived just across the river, I made a decision to track him down. A friend of mine from school, Michael Hunt, was also into Mad, and he wanted to go along. So one Saturday we bussed over to Vancouver from Portland with the wildly exciting idea that we would soon be face to face with, perhaps, an alien being from some far-flung galaxy.

Hunt and I arrived in downtown Vancouver and found a phone booth. I planted the coin, dialed Wolverton's number and did my nervous best to act businesslike (no easy task for a teenage zany while Hunt jeered, made faces and pounded maniacally on the phone booth). Wolverton was meeting a deadline on a cartoon for Outboard magazine, but he took my phone number and said he would get back to me later. In a few days a meeting was arranged. His wife was going shopping in Portland, and he would be able to drop by. "Keep a candle burning in the window in case I have trouble finding the place," he said.

character© Marvel

The doorbell rang. There stood Basil the Wolverton himself--small, graying, plump, well-kept and intense. This was about the time that his "Bible Story" illustrations began appearing in The Plain Truth.

I told him the Mad Wolvertoons were more my cup of tea. "My so-called comedy material has always come more naturally to me," he explained, adding that it was also easier to do because there was no demand for accuracy and no research was required.

I asked about his style. "It developed naturally, about like one develops one's handwriting. A neighbor of mine, who is also a professional cartoonist--Al Fagaly--once told me, 'You can't draw. You just cover up your lack of ability with a lot of lines.' I'll have to admit he wasn't too far off." I learned that it took about a day to execute a "gore-juss" cartoon head while a "Bible Story" illustration might extend to two days of work.

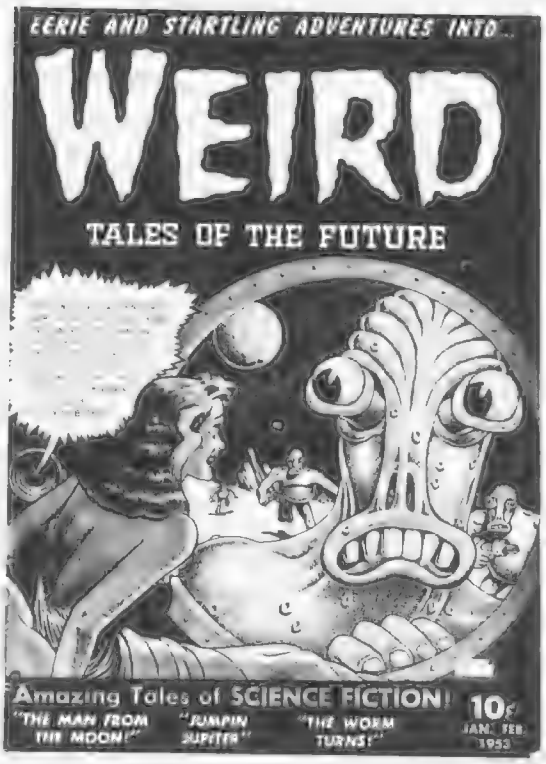
On later visits Basil zapped me with lots of clever remarks. One of my favorite memories of a trek to Vancouver was the time I found him working in his backyard, digging in the garden. We were standing there talking when an ant fell from a tree branch to the back of his hand. "Hello, George," he said to the ant. "I see you've gained a little weight since last summer." Aside from conversations with ants and other aspects of his truly original comic sense, one of the most impressive things to me was that he was earning a good living creating all this wonderful cartoon foolishness. It was almost as if he were getting away with something while everybody else had to work for a living.

He began drawing as a child. "My first cartoons for pay were ones I made for the Vancouver Farmers' Market when I was eleven years old. Each week I'd make a cartoon likeness of some popular newspaper comic strip character; I'd take it in, and the man there would give me four bits for each one. They displayed them there, and this probably meant more to me then than selling to a magazine does today."

In the late Twenties Wolverton worked in Northwest vaudeville on the Safford circuit throughout Oregon and Washington. "It was fun. I did all kinds of crazy things--like catching my fingers in the uke strings and using my feet to get them loose. I'd introduce some of the songs with fake titles such as 'My Father Takes Me Fishing 'Cause He Thinks I Have Worms'."

In the early days of his art career he got an offer to work for the silent screen star Charles Ray who was then publishing Hollywood Today. Basil was going to do some show-biz caricatures for that magazine, and he went to Hollywood in that pursuit. This was at the same time that former Portlander Mel Blanc, a friend of Basil's was beginning to click as a radio performer and animated cartoon voice-man. "We both struck out for Hollywood at about the same time. Mel came home in a 1929 Cadillac, and they carted me home in a 1910 wheelbarrow."

When comic books proliferated in the late Thirties, Wolverton was there. "The Forties were my big years," he recalled. The widow of Frank Miller (who did the syndicated Barney Baxter in the Air) asked Basil if he would ghost this strip, but he declined. He created the science fiction



superhero comic book character Spacehawk for Novelty Press' Target Comics in 1940. On one of his NYC trips during the Forties he dropped in on his Timely Comics (now Marvel) editor Stan Lee. "I remember I was wearing a plaid shirt at the time, and when I walked in, he asked, 'Where's your axe?'"

Then came Lena the Hyena. "I submitted seven drawings to that contest, and the winning entry was the one that I thought was the least horrible of the bunch. One had two heads, as I recall. Lena gave me a big boost in paving the way for future Life spreads. I had made some drawings on a horror spread for Life before Lena, but something came up to kill it. I think one of the main reasons I won that contest was that my entries were pen-and-ink line drawings and were therefore suitable for newsprint reproduction--whereas many were sent in color wash and other media." Wolverton's portrait of Lena appeared October 23, 1946, in all newspapers carrying "Lil' Abner".

After the Life magazine caricatures of the late Forties, his weird portraits of typical Mad readers appeared in the early Fifties Mad. He once called Mad's founding editor Harvey Kurtzman "The Master" in the cartooning field, and he also named the following as his personal favorites in cartoon and illustration: Roy Crane, Alex Raymond, Walt Kelly, Virgil Finlay, Rube Goldberg, Jack Davis and Wallace Wood. "One of my favorite strips was a thing called 'Old Doc Yak' by Sidney Smith who drew 'The Gumps'."

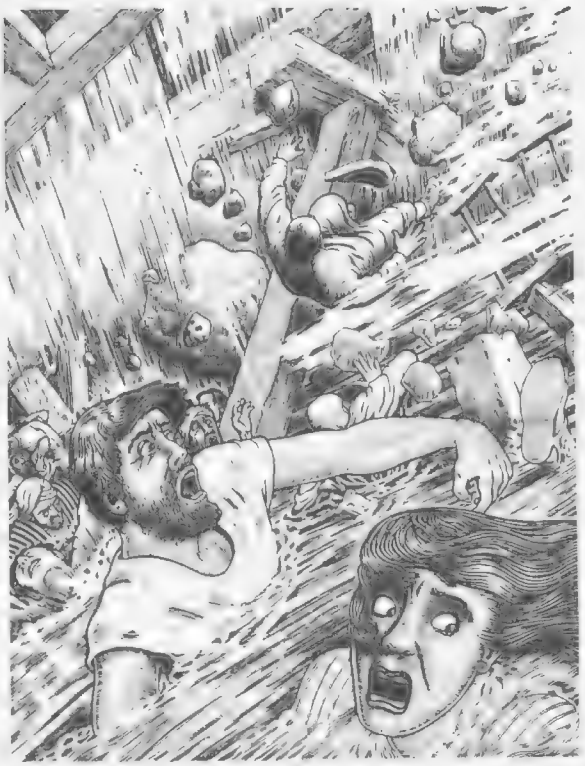
His ideas usually came from sketching. "If I had worked on inspiration alone, I'd have starved to death years ago. I always ask myself, 'What is the subject?' Then I'll start sketching on that one subject until I hit on something I'm happy with. I may make a dozen sketches before that happens, and then I'll get going on that one sketch until I make a finished cartoon from it that seems to me to be right for whatever it is that I'm doing. If this doesn't happen right off, I'll keep sketching until I do come up with something that fits that particular subject. If I find myself at a loss for ideas, I just get a box of liver pills and eat the whole thing, box and all. That'll do it every time."

Although comic books were his specialty from 1938 to 1954 (with a 1973 return to do covers for DC/National's Plop!), Basil Wolverton produced much more: magazine cartoon features ("Grunt and Grin" for Pageant in 1951), advertising art (radio personalities for Broadcasting magazine), bubble gum cards, poster and stickers (Topps Chewing Gum's "Ugly Stickers"), the classic bar book Common Types of BarFlyze (1952) and contemporary greeting cards for Barker "Longfellows" in the late Fifties. One of his Barker cards ("Here's hoping the doc gets you back together in good shape!") sold around a million copies.

In addition to his role as the "Producer of Preposterous Pictures of Peculiar People (Who Prowl This Perplexing Planet)," Wolverton also did radio comedy for nine Northwestern stations during the Forties and Fifties, hamming it up between records. In one strange experiment, he combined the disparate fields of cartooning and radio broadcasting. He asked listeners to write in, telling them he would do their portraits with only their handwriting for guide. "I'd do things like made the eyes large if someone's handwriting contained 'I's' which were oversized. Things like that." Wolverton art was shown on television during a Christmas season in the late Fifties on The Peter Lind Hayes Show, with Hayes ending the segment by commenting, "Merry Christmas to you and your nurse, Basil."

Wolverton was a self-taught talent ("with some art training in the third grade"), and I always got the idea that he was as much entertained by his work as his work entertained--although he was always humble about it. He had a few discouragements along the way, coming close to newspaper strip syndication a few times only to have it not materialize and preparing a book titled Here's the Answer, which he was unable to sell. He claimed to have "bushelsful of rejection slips." Some of his work he termed "ungood"; he never completed caricatures he had begun of Lucille Ball and Garry Moore.

During the time that I knew him, most of his output was for the serialized Ambassador Press "Bible Story", but he did manage to "whomp up" some comedy material for other publishers during those years: Mad, Commix Book, Favorite Westerns of Filmland, Favorite Monsters of Filmland Cracked. Wolvertoons also appeared from time to time in Ambassador publications--The Plain Truth, Tomorrow's World and The Good News--circulated throughout the English-speaking world in conjunction with publisher Herbert W. Armstrong's syndicated religious broadcasts. "I used to be an Old Testament man", said Basil, "but I got so tired carrying that big book around that I switched to the New Testament".



© Ambassador Press

During the Sixties I sold Basil's comic book collection for him to a collector. When the check arrived I called and asked if it would be okay for me to drop by with it that evening. He said they were going out to dinner at that time, but that if I felt like dropping over with it anyway, to just put the money in a huge envelope, nail it to the front of the house and paint a giant arrow pointing toward the envelope along with the words "HERE'S THE MONEY!!"

In the early Seventies he remarked, "I'm getting older and shakier now. It won't be long before I'll have to hire a Japanese girl to come in and hold my hand steady while I draw". Basil Wolverton is gone now. A stroke in 1974 left him incapacitated until his death. But the man who signed his comic book stories with middle names like "Weirdwit," "Warpwit" and "Cashkisser" left us a heritage of humor. He was a rare and individual artist who more often than not went delightfully overboard at his drawing board, much to our fiendish enjoyment. Now Monte Wolverton, his son, is continuing with comic art in a vein similar to his father's style. Monte, who has been published in S9 CB and CAR-toons, is skilled at caricature--which has always been considered the most difficult kind of cartooning--and his talent seems to be developing faster than Basil's did. Wolvertoons live!

-Dick Voll

PANELS IN MY LIFE

By George Snowden

It was my good fortune to be born in July, 1935, a few years earlier than Russ Cochran and a few years later than Bill Gaines, both of whom have had a profound influence on my enjoyment of life. I do not remember the first comic book I read, but it wasn't an EC. Nevertheless, I remember that when I was younger I had a growing awareness of the pleasure of reading comics. In those early days I was occupied with the superheroes: Captain Marvel, Superman, and two particular favorites - Torch and Toro. I followed the exploits of Plastic Man and Sheena along with Donald Duck, Mickey Mouse, others, and of course the various friends and enemies that were woven into the plots of their stories. They were great, I thought, but at that time I had no idea of what was to come. In the late Forties for a dime anyone could buy hours of reading and trading pleasure. I was approaching 15, and I remember those days with a fuzzy blur of impressions - the world at war, shortages, blacked-out car headlights and Navy blimps flying over the Rhode Island home where I spent summers and vacations. They were looking for enemy submarines off the coast. While we were at war, I was fighting the comic-book enemies. It was a good time, but my memories now are clearer on another subject - EC.

I clearly recall buying my first EC comic. It was the start of their New Trend series; my start of a love affair only a fellow "Fan-Addict" could understand. The issue was that classic first Weird Science with Al Feldsteins's marvelous cover. Long before Russ Cochran or Bruce Hershenson's 12 EC reprints came into my life and long, long after the comic itself was gone from my collection I could quote word for word the "Good Lord, Karl..." text from the cover and much of what followed. Such is my love for EC. The words are somewhat rusty now, but the excitement - well, that's more than ever.

This all started in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on a cloudy day while I was walking along the famous boardwalk. I passed a cigar store (the kind that I knew sold comics) and went back to find a row of my favorites lined up against one wall on the bottom. I glanced over the titles, looking for new issues. I thought I might like to have a few to enjoy while we were there spending a few days away from New York on a school vacation. After a few minutes of poking amidst the known quantities I discovered something new I'd never heard of—Weird Science? I wondered about the name, almost put it back, then decided to give it a try. It did look interesting, at least, and at that time I was beginning to follow Astounding's science fiction stories. I had read enough science fiction and fantasy by then to pay my dime for this comic rather than something else. It was one of the more intelligent decisions in my life.

The vacation was never quite the same

afterwards. I had become unknowingly hooked on EC at that point, but (back then) I might have found it hard to believe that 30 years later, give or take a few months and a million interesting developments, I'd be sitting here typing a love-text about that particular cloudy New Jersey shore day and all that it was later to mean to me.

During the days following I read and re-read that Weird Science over and over. I even interested my parents to do the same, and they said that they liked it. It was something special, something to be saved, and I wondered then if all along I'd been missing something; after all, it appeared to me to be the 12th in a series, based on the cover number. Before then I'd never heard of EC, nor had I read Saddle Romances or any of the Pre-Trend issues. I own a precious few of these now and can't wait until Russ puts out copies of these oldies so I can look even further back into time and see what I'd been missing. Now I understand about the Post Office mailing rules for consecutively-numbered things such as these, but for many years I puzzled over the EC numbering-system.

As time passed I faded out my Marvel and Dell search and only bought the growing line of ECs. The Old Witch replaced Donald Duck and the Crypt-Keeper, the superheroes. I spent a lot of time away at school in New Hampshire and had continuing subscriptions to the whole line. If ever I could get away from school, even for a few hours, and that was nearly impossible until later on, I haunted two local newsstands in Concord for ECs. By having an extra copy on hand, the one waiting for me at home could remain virtually untouched - a practice I was to continue for the next few years. I still read a few other comic books at the time, but mainly out of interest to see how they were copying the marvelous EC style. My mother wrote dutifully to me to tell me what ECs had arrived during the past week: "A Vault of Horror came today with a horrible cover." I probably spent hours thinking about what that cover might have been until I got into town, or home, to see it for myself. I was never disappointed.

If the first turning point in my love-affair with EC was the early, exciting, discovery of the golden nugget of Weird Science #12, the second golden treasure of discovery was when I persuaded my ever patient father to take me in a taxi one afternoon, totally unannounced, to a downtown New York address neither of us had ever been to before. "Two hundred and twenty five Lafayette Street, wherever that is," he told the driver. All of us had been New Yorkers for years, and I, since birth, but now I was heading rapidly downtown into totally unfamiliar territory. This was solely in order to, hopefully, buy Shock SuspenStories#1, the issue with Al Feldstein's electric chair sequence on the cover. I had been completely unable to locate this issue on any newsstand; sending in my 75 cents for the next six issues and then waiting months for the second issue - well, that would never do. We soon arrived at 225 Lafayette and the hallowed doorway of room 706. We entered, my father leading the way, I peering into every corner at once trying to see all I could see in those first few minutes. It was a little like opening a Christmas stocking, full of good things and you just couldn't decide which one to open first.

Frank Lee, cigar in his mouth, rose from his business-manager desk near the door to greet us. Nearby, hanging on a wall, were covers of Weird Fantasy, The Haunt of Fear, Crime SuspenStories and others, including the Shock#1 I'd come to buy. As I took all of this in, we were gently being shepherded into an inner room where a large man sat comfortably behind an even larger wooden desk cluttered with papers and a wheel of assorted rubber stamps. He rose, smiling, extended his hand and welcomed us in. I was wide-eyed and fascinated with this very special place, and my father was probably wondering what this was all about. I had met Bill Gaines for the first time.

In the minutes that followed, we talked of publishing, of EC comics (naturally) and of Ray Bradbury and his work, which we both appreciate. By that visit EC had adapted various stories of his under the headline "America's Top Horror Writer." The fact that Ray Bradbury wrote good horror stories as well as poetic and beautiful science fiction tales was something of a revelation to me. I learned at that meeting of the Arkham House publication of his Dark Carnival. And so, with this new quest in mind, I managed luckily a few weeks later to acquire a copy, much to my delight - then and to this day. Bill Gaines was quick to produce a copy of Shock #1, and Al Feldstein autographed a print of his cover of Weird Science #11 which was due shortly. We had to go somewhere else before returning home. I'd put my Shock SuspenStories into my father's briefcase along with Al's autographed cover copy and hoped they would be safe there. We were in a hurry, after being downtown for longer than expected, and in the confusion of rushing, we arrived late at our destination. Then came the discovery that the briefcase had been left behind as the taxi sped off. I was crushed. Here was a strange man with an unpronounceable name in an undistinctive yellow taxi and he was unknowingly driving off with my most precious possessions. The Shock had been given to me from the hands of Bill Gaines himself -- could anything be more special to me at that time? And how could one ever replace an Al Feldstein autographed cover? My father, worried over the loss of his batch of business papers, called the police.

In less than 24 hours everything had been recovered from a lost items office and, my keen eye judging, it certainly appeared that nobody, the driver or the following passenger who discovered the missing briefcase, had apparently touched or read my comic. I felt the weight of years rising off my shoulders, and it was great!

A few years later I was asked to write a brief article about EC. Not well-written I admit, but it appeared in the first issue of the EC Fan Bulletin, a fanzine of the period that lasted two issues. I have Xerox copies of each now; my original of #1 was sent years later, to Rich Hauser, editor of the 5-issue Spa Fon.

After my first visit to the EC offices I had the pleasure of other visits there, from time to time and on occasion, met other EC staffers. I never did meet Wally Wood, my favorite of them all, but Al Williamson was there once, and that was fun. What fantastic talent EC was blessed with -- most of all, Al Feldstein, a jack of many trades! Bill Gaines and I remained good friends. I never see him often enough; for years at a time

I sometimes didn't see him at all, but whenever we have met, it's like erasing the time between. This is one of the longest-standing friendships which I have maintained steadily over nearly 3/4 of my life. Bill is wonderful, generous, warm, sincere, and genuine.

I wrote to EC from time to time between visits, often to praise their stories. Excerpts from some of the letters were printed, much to my delight. A comment in Shock concerned the good I thought "The Patriots" (#2) would do the American public. This brought a response six months later from a 14-year old girl, Araceli de la Cruz, in Manila. She noted the Watch Hill, Rhode Island, address next to my name and wrote asking me to be a pen-pal. I have no idea now where this letter is or if I still have it, but I never wrote back to her -- I don't know why, except that she was somewhat younger (and distant) at the time, and I guess I was either busy or lazy. All these many, long years I have remembered her letter and wished that I had written back; it could have been another interesting EC contact; if nothing else came of it, it at least was interesting to learn that EC had more than just a local circulation in those days -- of which I wasn't aware of.

At the peak of my interest, came the crunch. The so called "Comics Code" was established, and the world in which I was so happily wrapped up started to fall apart. With my father's support and guidance, we wrote in ECs favor (freedom of the press, etc.) to the various commissions. It was a period of chaos: Dr. Frederic Wertham's Seduction of the Innocent came out, Bill Gaines testified before the Senate, and soon afterwards EC put notices for the titles in their New Trend series. It looked like the beginning of the end...

Most of my friends read ECs, many read others also, but there was no "club" as such of which I was a member, just the national EC Fan-Addict organization. Being a devoted fan of all that Gaines & Associates produced, and having been involved so intimately, it was a natural progression of events that one evening I asked both Bill and Al up to my parents' apartment at the end of their work-day. We all had a great time. Bill still talks of that visit. I showed them my proud EC collection, all mint condition, unread copies in a glassed in case in my room. All were stacked up in alphabetical piles with the most current edition of each on top. As there still were some issues missing, Bill and Al generously furnished me with the New Trend issues that I didn't have. This made my collection at the time one of the largest private EC collections in the US. The price it would bring if I had it today would probably allow me to retire and finance college educations for all six daughters we have been blessed with in the past 16 years. But this is speculation - I no longer have the collection, and if I did, it would not be for sale even at the highest price. As far as Pre-Trend issues, I have acquired a few in the past year but only owned one (Moon Girl) then. I bought it for $4.00, thinking that was a pretty high price. It was then; now, of course, it is worth ten times as much, or more.

Once I was the proud and lucky possessor of a very rare set of EC cufflinks - Bill bestowed these to me on one of my last visits to 225 Lafayette. The other cufflinks had been given out to the EC staff and artists in honor of a celebration. Even though I don't own these now, I will never forget them. Spa Fon editor, Rich Hauser, has them now, I hope, as I sent them to him years ago. Perhaps he will read this someday and let me know they are still safe in his possession as they wouldn't have been with me. These beautiful cufflinks are a gold circle encircling the EC logo.

I was growing out of my teenage years, madly in love (still am) and deeply involved in other cares of the day: graduating, facing the draft or the alternates (I chose the 6-month Army program), summer work far from home and family (working on a survey team in a potash mine in Carlsbad, New Mexico). The pressure started, first from my fiance, then in a lesser degree from my parents and grandfather to "do something" about my comics (sneer) before I got married. All of this was coming on as I approached the ripe age of 23 with my Army active duty months behind me, planning to be married in September, 1958, with a banking career ahead of me. EC was forced by these circumstances to take a lesser part of my life. It was not my choice, believe me, but one dreadful night I sat up for hours, almost until dawn, destroying my entire collection. My illogical reasoning at the time, and under pressure, said that if I couldn't own them, then nobody else could either! They had value then - perhaps far, far less than they would command now, but how was I to know that at that time? In a short span, only memories, a few original Weird Science editions, and cut-outs of the Ray Bradbury adaptations remained. It was a happy time, tinged with this sadness and the parting of these old friends, but I was far too busy getting a new phase of my life in order than to experience the great loss I now feel as I write this.

The years following can be compressed into short spurts of memories: the Army, marriage, employment at the Bank of New York, then employment with The Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States, six daughters (aged 8, 10, 12, 15, 20 and 22 at this date) and a move from NYC to Greenwich, Conn. In the last half-dozen years, I have used my memories of EC stories as springboards for my imagination, producing no less than 40 short, unpublished, stories of horror, science-fiction and fantasy. These are original tales, but I think the feeling of growing suspence or fear in them can only be related to the stories, not the plots, that made so much of my life special in the Fifties.

During those years, and then on into the Seventies when I started to get a whiff of the revival current that a new, second generation of fans (and some first-generation fans like Russ Cochran) was bringing along, I remained in distant but constant touch with Bill Gaines. It was a dormant relationship too much of the time, I'm sorry to say, and waiting out a long winter's hibernation. While employed at the Bank of New York I gladly added my name to their annual Christmas card that was sent by one of the branch officers who had had some ongoing relationship with Bill. I don't recall how I learned of this, but at least it was a way to say hello even if it always seemed I was too busy to drop in on him at the new uptown offices. Finally, one afternoon I came back EC, after calling on bank customers, and was as warmly welcomed as if it had

been just yesterday and not years. Bill is that kind of person; he never forgets who really cares, and I have always felt welcome dropping in. There is an open and considerate feeling whenever a true fan pays a call, it seems no matter how busy they are meeting deadlines and schedules. It was delightful to see him again, now well-bearded. He autographed and handed me copies of two great books: The EC Horror Library of the 1950's and The Mad World of William M. Gaines. I also learned then of the plans to publish facsimile ECs by East Coast Comix. This series ended after the 12th issue due to the rise in publishing costs. Sad as it was at the time, it did pave the way for me to hear from Russ Cochran, who had taken my name from an East Coast Comix mailing list.

In mid-1969 I received a letter from Rich Hauser describing his efforts to produce Spa Fon. I'm not going to cover the origin of those words – see your earlier Weird Science reprints or originals for this expression as well as "Squa Tront" a term which is now even better known as the title of an EC quality fanzine. Rich talked of being a second generation EC fan. This touched my heart in a way only another EC Fan-Addict could understand. I suddenly felt very old and full of memories. Here I was, being approached by a new generation of EC fans, asking what I could do for them. A week later I heard from Squa Tront editor, Jerry Weist. Both Rich and Jerry had received my name from Bill and decided to look me up. Luckily I was still living in New York then as our family hadn't grown to the size it is now, and we all could still fit into an apartment at reasonable rent. So we were still listed conveniently in the Manhattan directory. By the time Jerry's courteous letter reached me in 1969, I had already sent Rich a few of my remaining EC treasures: a mint-condition 3D Tales of Terror, a few old fanzines, an uncolored copy of a Weird Science cover, the cufflinks and a long letter full of my thoughts and happiest memories from my days in the past. I asked him to share the letter I sent with Bill Gaines. He did, writing a warm letter of appreciation back, stating that he'd send me a copy of Spa Fon #5. Unfortunately, that was the last time I heard from Rich and still wait, 11 years later for him to send that copy of #5; we EC-lovers are a persistent lot! I was in touch with Jerry Weist later, noting that I had sent all I could send on to Rich Hauser just a week earlier and was sorry.

Had I retained those special cufflinks, they would not have lasted the decade; we were burglarized in 1978, and all my jewelry was stolen and never recovered. I'm awfully glad these rare items were in the best possible hands.

Years passed. One day I was surprised to receive a letter from a "Russ Cochran." I wondered what this letter from West Plains, Missouri, was all about, strongly suspecting it to be an appeal from a group of starving midwest Indians looking for a contribution. I get a lot of peculiar solicitations, especially around Christmas, but even though this was in May, 1978, I had no interest in opening it and circulated it into the pile of mail to be opened last and most probably thrown away. It went under the bills received that day and sat unopened on the desk for two or three days. When I finally figured out that neither the bills nor this strange letter were going to go away if left unopened, I worked my way down through the pile. Staring back at my wide-opened eyes were black-and-white miniature Weird Science covers that I had so loved and remembered all those years. I mailed my check for $40 within the hour and waited for months afterwards with thousands of others for these beautiful volumes to arrive; they did, weeks before we were to move to another house. I finally got a chance to read them months later, and they were more beautiful than I ever believed they could be!

Realizing that there were more things I had missed, I went back over the house ads in the 12 EC reprints and then set forth on a quest to obtain copies of the 1972 Convention magazine EC Lives. These was done through the kindness of Jerry Weist. These six EC Portfolios were bought directly from Russ Cochran whom I was getting to know better and better through his collector's correspondence. About this same time, earlier in 1979, I coincidentally passed a comic book store, Supersnipe Galleries, in New York and saw a copy of Squa Tront #8 in the window. That was a familiar name - I still had #2 & #3 tucked away in my basement. I rushed in to buy #8, soon afterwards obtaining the missing issues from Squa Tront editors John Benson and Jerry Weist. My collection was on the rise again, and I was reliving the lost years. It was the best of times.

I was doubly surprised when I read my name in Squa Tront. There were some inaccuracies and misinterpretations, but John unnecessarily apologized for them in a letter later, noting that he thought I had been lost to the world of EC. This was more a case of having been passed by the tide of the times and not knowing all that had been quietly progressing while I was busy doing other things. I was so glad to learn that EC had not faded away but was experiencing a strong revival with the aid of people like Jerry, Russ and of course Bill Gaines, who was still involved. Through those days, and continuing as I write this, there has been a lot of rushing around, buying things and turning up leads and references. One of the best is Overstreet's Comic Book Price Guide. Through The Buyer's Guide and other sources I have obtained a complete run (except Shock #30) of Picto-fiction magazines, the Ballantine book reprints in mint conditon and a large stack of Mad specials. I'm back again as much of a Fan-Addict as ever, loving every minute of this. And after 27 years of marriage and even more years of knowing me, my wife and most of my dughters still don't understand this!

It's been my pleasure to call Bill Gaines my good friend for 30 years and Russ Cochran the same. Since I started writing to him, every letter is more full of praise than the last for all he is doing for us, and all he will do in the future. I was the guest of Bill Gaines for dinner while Russ was in town, making this special occasion complete. What an evening! It went on for hours, but never hours enough. We started off with steaks as an appetizer (in keeping with the comment in The MAD World of William M. Gaines that this is Bill's usual practice when he dines out). Then we moved on to the five-pound lobsters he'd requested especially for the occasion. They were fabulous, tender, and delicious, the biggest I've ever seen with claws the size of footballs. Bill enjoyed various wines with this meal; he is an expert on the subject. I enjoyed the great

conversations between these giants of the comic-publishing field. Russ' plans are great ones for years into the future, and if he does all that he hopes to do, EC fandom will be enriched for the third and succeeding generations with wonderful treasures. Russ, like Bill, is a large man, bearded, and as nice a person as one could have behind the EC revival movement. Like me, he has never let go of the boy within the man; he knows the thrill of a special collection tucked away in a closet-box where he can dig for hours into fantasies and horror stories, war tales, suspense and adventure. We both collected ECs in the Fifties and through him, we can collect them again. I feel blessed knowing these two men.

Time runs backwards at the present Mad offices. Once past the telephone operator/secretary you are buzzed into the inner sanctum. A few steps further inside Bill Gaines, sits behind a smaller wooden desk (or at least it appears that way as the office is slightly smaller than the one at 225 Lafayette -- and his is somewhat bigger). His wheel of rubber stamps still sits on the desk. Completely covering a window is a large King Kong mask. Hanging from the ceiling are models of blimps, zeppelins, and the like - he is fascinated by such things. The office is cluttered with objects, some of which have great meaning from the old days of the New Trend series - paintings of the Vault Keeper, Crypt Keeper and Old Witch, all of which, including one of Al Feldstein's paintings, have been on Squa Tront covers. Around the halls Alfred E. Neuman grins from various Mad covers. In the stockroom are hundreds of copies of paperback Mads and a clock that runs in reverse with the one to the left of the twelve. It is a crazy, delightful place - a den of true genius and originality, reflecting in all aspects the man behind this movement and the magazine's delightful way of looking at the world.

This article is my testament to my love for EC comics over the years and miles, none of which seem so distant now when I can pull out both the East Coast Comix and Russ Cochran reprints of that first Weird Science and remember that time when I bought the original issue. Hell, most days I can't tell you what I had for lunch by the time dinner is getting cold on the table. To remember buying one particular comic book 30 years later must mean more than a little something! This article is really more a series of comic-panels looking back and forth into my life; turn pages and you turn time. Spot sentences at one point or another and you freeze action. I am a certain age now, doing a certain thing; EC has been a delightful, meaningful, most enjoyable part of many sections and panels in my life. There is no doubt or question in my mind that these are the best of any comics ever produced. Who else had Al Feldstein both as a writer and artist? Could anyone create such a mood of space as Wally Wood or of growing, oozing horror as Graham Ingels? Who can forget a Harvey Kurtzman war story? Russ asked me the other evening after dinner who were my favorite EC artists; it is hard to say, with so much talent to consider, but I would name Wood and Ingels certainly among the top choices.

My paper is finished, but my love for EC goes on! In this text I have told a series of only personal impressions and glances into the past. I have loved writing this as I love anything to do with EC. If my family thinks I'm a nut, a fellow collector will refer to me as a "Fan-Addict" and that says it all. Of course I am, I think to myself, and pleased to be a part of it. EC Lives? You bet it does! A Spa Fon and a resounding Squa Tront to you all!

George Snowden at the right with Jack Davis center at the Dimension Con in New York in 1982. George Snowden sadly passed away two years later.

Frazetta & KRENKEL INDEX

The following is a list of the first edition numbers for books with covers by Frank Frazetta and Roy Krenkel. The first part lists Frazetta paperbacks unlesss otherwise stated.

By Bruce Brenner

E.R.Burroughs
ACE Paperbacks
F Series 40 cents

F-156	At the Earths Core	Krenkel
F-157	Moon Maid	Krenkel
F-158	Pellucidar	Krenkel
F-159	Moon Men	R.G.K.-fp. only
F-168	Thuvia, Maid of Mars	Krenkel
F-169	Tarzan and the Lost Empire	Frazetta
F-170	The Chessmen of Mars	Krenkel
F-171	Tanar of Pellucidar	Krenkel
F-179	Pirates of Venus	Krenkel
F-180	Tarzan at the Earths Core	Frazetta
F-181	Mastermind of Mars	Krenkel (w.F.F.)
F-182	Monster Men	Frazetta
F-189	Tarzan the Invincible	Frazetta
F-190	Fighting Man of Mars	Krenkel
F-193	The Son of Tarzan	Frazetta
F-194	Tarzan Triumphant	Krenkel (w.F.F.)
F-203	Beasts of Tarzan	Frazetta
F-204	Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar	Frazetta
F-205	Tarzan and the City of Gold	Frazetta
F-206	Jungle Tales of Tarsan	Frazetta
F-211	Planet of Peril (Kline)	Krenkel
F-212	Tarzan and the Lion Men	Frazetta
F-213	Land that Time Forgot	Krenkel
F-220	People that Time Forgot	Krenkel
F-221	Lost on Venus	Frazetta
F-232	Land of Hidden Men	Krenkel
F-233	Out of Times Abyss	Krenkel
F-234	Eternal Savage	Krenkel
F-235	Lost Continent	Frazetta
F-245	Back to the Stone Age	Krenkel (w.F.F.)?
F-247	Carson of Venus	Frazetta
F-256	Land of Terror	Frazetta
F-258	Cave Girl	Krenkel
F-259	Prince of Peril (Kline)	Krenkel
F-268	Escape on Venus	Krenkel
F-270	The Mad King	Frazetta
F-280	Savage Pellucidar	Frazetta
F-282	Beyound the Farthest Star	Frazetta
F-294	Port of Peril (Kline)	Krenkel
F-296	Gulliver of Mars (Arnold)	Frazetta
F-307	Warrior of Llarn (Fox)	Frazetta
F-311	Swordmen in the Sky (Wollheim)	Frazetta
F-321	Maza of the Moon (Kline)	Frazetta
F-354	Hunter out of Time (Fox)	F.F.-fp. only

ACE Paperbacks: New Series.
Frazetta Covers.

03322	At the Earths Core	75¢
04632	Back to the Stone Age	75¢
05652	Beyond the Farthest Star	75¢
46997	Land of Terror	75¢
47012	Land of Hidden Men	75¢
64510	Outlaw of Torn	75¢
65852	Pellucidar	75¢
65942	People that Time Forgot	75¢
75132	Savage Pellucidar	75¢
79792	Tanar of Pellucidar	75¢
09202	Carson of Venus	95¢
21562	Escape on Venus	95¢
53702	Moon Maid	95¢
53752	Moon Men	95¢
54460	The Mucker	95¢
71815	Return of the Mucker	95¢
60563	The Oakdale Affair	$1.25
72280	The Rider	$1.25
18770	E.R.B.--Master of Adventure (reprints cover F-203)	95¢
18771	E.R.B.--Master of Adventure (New Cover)	$1.25
44470	King Kong	$1.95
44472-5	King Kong Movie Script	$1.95

Fawcett:

L1494	The Reassembled Man	45¢
D1852	Amsirs and the Iron Thorn	50¢
T1978	Rogue Roman	75¢
R2207	High Side	60¢
T2219	Strange Creatures from Time & Space	75¢

P2623 Child of the Sun $1.25

Lancer

73-526	Conan the Adventurer	1967	60¢
73-549	Conan the Warrior	1967	60¢
73-572	Conan the Conqueror	1967	60¢
73-599	Conan the Userper	1967	60¢
73-685	Conan	1967	60¢
73-780	Conan the Advenger	1968	60¢
75-972	Conan of Cimmeria	1969	95¢
75181-095	Conan the Buccaneer	1971	95¢
72-701	Secret People	1964	50¢
72-761	Reign of Wizardry	1964	50¢
73-476	Phoenix Prime	1966	60¢
73-591	Busy Body	1967	60¢
73-721	Wolfshed	1968	60¢
74-564	Kavin's World	1969	75¢
74-840	Torture Garden	1965	75¢
75165-095	Black Emporer	1973	95¢
15415-095	Witch of Dark Gate	1972	95¢
75465-095	Devils Generation	1973	95¢

Pinnacle

P010-N	The God Makers	1970	95¢
P020-N	To Catch a Crooked Girl	1971	95¢

Paperback Library

52-586	Thongar Against the Gods	1967	50¢
53-618	The Tritonian Ring	1968	60¢
53-665	Thongar in City of Magicians	1968	60¢
55-693	The Serpent	1968	95¢
55-738	Atlan	1968	95¢
63-089	Brak vs. the Soceress	1969	60¢

Ballantine

U2106	Tales from the Crypt	1964	50¢
U2107	The Vault of Horror	1965	50¢
U2140	Tales of the Incedible	1965	50¢
U2141	Autumn People	1965	50¢
U2142	Tomorrow Midnight	1966	50¢
23793	Luana	1974	$1.25

Popular Library

2335	Danger Planet	60¢
2346	Solar Invasion	60¢
2355	Creature from Beyond Infinity	60¢
2376	Outlaw World	60¢
02474	Monster from Out of Time	60¢
02498	Jongar of the Lost Land	60¢
02511	Return of Jongar	60¢
02540	Jongar Fights Back	60¢

Midwood

interior art only; 8 sketches in each

D-231	Wild Week/Imitation Lovers Jason Hytes/March Hastings	75¢
S-277	Perfumed/Pampered Jason Hytes/Kimberly Kemp	75¢
34-395	Dangerous Age/Bad Choice Joan Ellis/Jason Hytes	75¢
34-612	Perfumed/The Wild Week Jason Hytes/Jason Hytes	75¢

Dell

9461	What's New Pussycat?	1965	50¢
0774	Brak Mak Morn	1969	60¢
2388	Eternal Champion	1970	60¢
0931	Ardor on Aros	1973	95¢
0932	Black Star	1973	95¢
1182	Atlantis Rising	1973	95¢
2640	Flashing Swords #1	1973	95¢
3123	Flashing Swords #2	1974	95¢
3830	Into the Aether	1974	95¢
7994	Silver Warriors	1973	95¢
8625	Time War	1974	95¢
3343	Book of Paradox	1975	$1.25

Warner

78-711	Bloodstone	1975	$1.50
	Dark Crusade	1976	
82-633	The Flesh Eaters	1979	$2.25
89-587	Night Winds	1978	$1.95
89-598	Darkness Weaves	1978	$1.95
90-001	Death Angels Shadow	1978	$1.95
90-115	Witherwing	1979	$1.95

Miscellaneous

CL-69	Wizard of Oz; Airmont	1965	.50
04080	Battlestar Galactica 2; Berkley	1979	$1.95
5363	Brak the Barbarian; Avon	1968	.60
B60-110	Nightwalk; Banner	1967	.60
Y5491	Flash for Freedom; Signet	1973	$1.25
Y6094	Flashman at the Charge; Signet	1974	$1.25
239	Swords Against Darkness; Zebra	1977	$1.95
5602	Mrs. Pollifax -- Spy; Tandem	1971	25p

Roy Krenkel

Roy did 21 covers on Ace F-series paperbacks with frontpieces. F-159 is f.p. only with an Ed Emsh cover. Frazetta helped on F-194, F-181 and maybe F-245.

Ace

90190	Wizard of Venus (no f.p.)	60¢
A-25	Outlaw of Torn	75¢

Lancer

73-636	Highway in Hiding	1967	60¢
73-650	King Kull	1967	60¢
74-045	Dragon of Ishtar Gate	1968	95¢

Daw

UQ1120	By the Light of the Green Star	1974	95¢
UY1107	Handon of Ancient Opar	1974	$1.25
UY1125	Iron Castle		$1.25
UY1156	As the Green Star Rises	1975	$1.25
UW1238	Flight to Opar	1976	$1.50

Zebra

113	Sowers of Thunder	1975	$1.75

De la Ree

The Mistcast Barbarian	1975	

Airmont

C1-69	The Wizard of Oz	1965	50¢
	(9 interior inks, Frazetta helped on cover)		

FRAZETTA

PORTFOLIO

The water color rough to the left was done as a preliminary for the artwork on the movie poster of *The Gaunlet.*

The water color rough to the left was done as a preliminary to the cover of *Carson of Venus*.

These five panels were intended to be used in a never finished EC Picto Fiction for the story "Came the Dawn," which was first illustrated by Wally Wood in *Shock Suspenstories.*

$6.95